Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Nursing leaders begin five-day conference on Saipan. PAGE 3

Alleged intoxicated customs officers fires gun. PAGE 5

OPINION METER

This week's poll:

With the pandemic alert now at Phase 6, do you practice what DPH recommends to avoid the flu?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

PANDEMIC ALERT STATUS PHASE 6

As of June 15, 2009

Phase 1: Viruses circulating among animals have yet to cause infections in humans.

Phase 2: An animal influenza virus is causing infection in humans, and is considered a potential pandemic threat.

Phase 3: An animal or human-animal influenza virus has caused sporadic cases or small clusters of disease in people, but has not resulted in human-to-human transmission sufficient to sustain community-level outbreaks.

Phase 4: Verified human-to-human transmission of an animal or human-animal influenza virus able to cause "community-level outbreaks."

Phase 5: A strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of planned mitigation measures is short.

Phase 6: The pandemic phase, is an indication that a global pandemic is underway.

For more information about the H1N1 flu, contact DPH at 236-8797, Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm, 234-8950 during after hours, e-mail cnmipheoc@gmail.com, or visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

Source: CNMI Department of Public Health, World Health Organization

INSIDE

Iran Mayhem

Protesters battled police over Iran's disputed election and shouted their opposition from the rooftops.

WORLD...Page 16

THS principal removed from post

Commissioner rules 6 seniors passed requirements

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Tinian High School principal Florine Hofschneider has been relieved from her post and her decision to fail six students has been rescinded, allowing these students to finally get their diplomas and graduate.

The six seniors were told about the relief of Hofschneider as the school's chief administrator in a meeting yesterday morning with Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan at the school's library.

See THS on Page 4

NURSING CONFERENCE HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

CNMI Nursing Association president Lee Castro, left, who is also the vice president of the American Pacific Nursing Leaders Council, confers with APNLC president Toaga A. Seumalo of American Samoa during yesterday's opening of the five-day 31st Conference of the American Pacific Nursing Leaders Council at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan. This year's theme, "Nurses Empowering Lives," reflects the important role that nurses play in enabling their patients to live to their optimum capacity. ***See stories on Page 3.***

DOF RELEASES OVER 10,000 REBATE CHECKS

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Over 5,000 rebate checks were mailed out on Friday and another 5,000 were sent out yesterday, according to press secretary Charles P. Reyes.

Inos

"We made good on our promise," Reyes said, adding that some residents received their checks on Saturday.

He said the distribution is done by batches of 5,000 each.

See REBATE on Page 4

$10M suit filed vs dialysis bldg. designer

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI government filed in federal court yesterday a $10-million lawsuit against the Texas company that designed the Commonwealth Health Center's dialysis center, saying the building plan was defective.

The CNMI government asked the federal court to order Leo A. Daly Co. to pay

See $10M on Page 4

Feds cite 'serious deficiencies' in dialysis project

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

First of a two-part series

SPECIAL REPORT

As early as June 2007, the U.S. Office of Inspector General, along with the CNMI Office of the Public Auditor, had already pointed out "serious deficiencies" in the contracting process for the dialysis center that started as a $5 million project, then $17.6 million two years ago, to $22 million to date.

Two years after the release of the report which, among other things, found "deficient" design

See FEDS on Page 4

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Local

Hocog, Maratita are Koblerville School's top graduates

MONETH G. DEPOSA

The Koblerville Elementary School's top awardees pose with their principal and vice principal. From left are vice principal Erica Sonoda Thornburgh, Loria Dee Hocog, Blesilda Grace Maratita, and principal Rizalina Purugganan.

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Loria Dee Ada Hocog and Blesilda Grace Maratita were honored yesterday in a promotional ceremony at Koblerville Elementary School, during which 72 sixth graders were promoted to junior high school.

Hocog, 12, was given the Commissioner's Award and seven other honors, including Top 5 and Best in Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading, Writing, And Bilingual Studies.

She is the daughter of Rose and Derek Hocog.

"We're just at the beginning of a long journey," said Hocog to her fellow graduates. "I do hope that every one of us will continue to pursue our education so we can all have a great future."

She stated her intention to become a physician someday.

Maratita received the Principal's Award and six other honors, namely Top 5 and Best in Science, Social Studies, Reading, Writing, And Bilingual Studies.

She is the daughter of Rizalina and April Purugganan.

Both students plan to enroll at Hopwood Junior High next school year.

The top five students also included Jarley Blanca, Emerson Feria, and Merly-Ann Fernandez.

In addition, the school granted deserving students the following recognitions: Spelling Bee Award, Geography Bee Award, Student Council Leadership Award, President's Award For Educational Improvement, Sports Award, and Athletes of the Year Awards.

Cinta Kaipat, deputy director for labor and immigration, was the keynote speaker. Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan and Koblerville Elementary acting principal Rizalina M. Purugganan also spoke. Hundreds attended.

Tanapag names Camacho and Dizon outstanding graduates

Tanapag Elementary School named Dimitrios Joseph Camacho and Maria Theresa Dizon as this year's outstanding students in a promotional ceremony last Friday.

DIMITRIOS JOSEPH CAMACHO
Commissioner's Award

MARIA THERESA DIZON
Principal's Award

Camacho was adjudged worthy of the top honor, the Commissioner's Award, while Dizon received the Principal's Award.

Camacho is the son of Arinta and Oscar Camacho, and Dizon is the daughter of Villa and Bernardino Dizon.

In their messages, the two recognized their families, friends, and teachers who helped them complete their primary grades successfully.

There were a total of 22 sixth graders who were promoted to junior high school during the ceremony, which was graced by nearly a hundred spectators.

The school selected 17 students from the graduating class to receive the presidential achievement award and five to receive the gold medal for the president's excellence awards.

Also on the school's list of top five graduates were Preschanel Viconicia Igitol, Devin Florencio Quitugua Noisom, and Rufina Fidela Flores Olupomar.

The school's PTA president Dora Mae Quitugua and student council president Rufina Fidela Noisom spoke at the ceremony. PSS Federal Programs officer Tim Thornburgh was also present. ***(Moneth G. Deposa)***

Sinapalo school promotes fifth graders to junior high

Sinapalo Elementary School promoted last week 40 fifth graders to junior high school during a ceremony on campus.

Principal Vanessa Q. Hocog said the students received their completion certificates and were also recognized for all their accomplishments this school year.

Commissioner of Education Rita A. Sablan and board member Tanya King served as the event's guests during a special ceremony attended by parents and members of the Rota community.

Saipan Tribune learned that the same event also promoted the kindergarten class to first grade.

Hocog said that each class gave a performance and each student received his or her certificate with confidence.

Unlike other elementary schools, the ceremony in Sinapalo school focused only on the issuance of certificates of completion and did not selected top students and awardees for various recognitions.

However, PTA officers and board members were recognized for their commitment and dedication towards SES.

Last school year, Sinapalo promoted 48 fifth graders to junior high school. ***(Moneth G. Deposa)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Newly promoted fifth graders of Sinapalo Elementary School pose for camera after their recognition ceremonies last week on campus. All 40 students will go to Rota Junior High School next year.

Nursing leaders begin five-day conference on Saipan

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Nursing leaders in the Pacific region vowed to continue providing care to the poor and sick and empowering lives in their community as they opened yesterday the five-day 2009 American Pacific Nursing Leaders Council Conference at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

Over a hundred participants listened to inspiring messages from APNLC president Toaga A. Seumalo of American Samoa, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos representing the CNMI government, CNMI Nursing Association president Lee Q. Castro, and keynote speaker Roylinne Wada of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The conference drew a total of 31 official delegates and four APNLC officials from 11 jurisdictions that includes American Samoa, Chuuk, CNMI, Guam, Marshall Islands, Palau, Pohnpei, Yap, Kosrae, Hawaii and, for the first time, Japan.

This year's conference theme is "Nurses Empowering Lives."

Castro, who is also the vice president of APNLC, explained that this theme reflects what nurses are most widely known for—providing care to the poor and sick.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Some of the close to a hundred nurses from the Pacific Rim pose for Saipan Tribune during a break at yesterday's opening of the five-day 31st Conference of the American Pacific Nursing Leaders Council at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan.

"Nurses empowers lives of the people in the community by doing preventive care, educating, and caring for the sick people in the community," Castro noted.

He said the nursing profession entails commitment and passion in caring for sick and needy patients, which is not an easy task, "especially when it comes to dealing with the most serious cases 24/7 and 365 days a year, and especially when you have to deal with a disease that you do not know."

Despite these risks, he said, nurses are still in the front line to respond to any individual who needs help.

After Wada's speech, APLNC officers Seumado (president), Castro (vice president), Irene Nero (secretary) and Rensely Alik (treasurer) reported on the organization's accomplishments in the previous year as well as the recent passage of a resolution lauding the University of Guam School of Nursing and Health Science's offer to provide space for APLNC offices.

Today's activities will be a series of discussions. A panel of speakers composed of Maria Salomon, Rosa Tudela, Arley Long and Pasquana Calvo will touch on the topic "Nursing Shortage in the CNMI: Impact of Quality of Healthcare and Nursing Education Programs" at 8am.

Department of Public Health's Women, Infants and Children's Clinic manager Dianne Esplin will discuss "Nutrition and Feeding in Infancy and Early Childhood" at 10:15am.

Other speakers are DPH's Jennifer Furey on the topic recognizing depression and the risk of suicide, Dr. Norma Ada on avoiding medical mistakes, Pam Carhill on obesity and exercises, Dr. Gary Ramsey on the anatomy of pain, and Dr. Shirish Balachandra on palliative care.

Other topics will be "STDs in the CNMI: Stats and Trends, Available Diagnostic Testing and Outreach Strategies" by John Moreno of DPH; "Recruitment and Retention Strategies of Nurses" by Lori Duenas; "Disaster Management" by Kathy Fritschk of the World Health Organization; and director of Pacific Resource Center's Pacific Resource for Education and Learning Jane Barnwell will speak about databases.

'Nursing staff shortage in NMI remains biggest challenge'

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The current shortage of nurses remains one of the biggest challenges the Nursing Association of the CNMI is facing, as it focuses on raising the standards of the profession.

This problem will be one of the main topics of discussions in today's second day of the ongoing 2009 American Pacific Nursing Leaders Conference at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

The current ratio of nurse to patient in the CNMI is estimated at about 1:5 to 1:7.

Nurses are forced to struggle with high patient-to-nurse ratios while still trying to meet optimum standards of healthcare practice, the association said.

To help address the manpower shortage, organizers have invited several expert speakers who will delve into the recruitment of nurses. The topic "Recruitment and Retention Strategies of Nurses in the CNMI" will be one of the conference highlights today.

There are about 250-260 licensed nurses in the CNMI, according to association president Lee. Q. Castro.

The Nurse Practice Act, which became effective in 2005, requires all nurses to pass the NCLEX exam in order to practice their profession in the CNMI.

With the amendment of the Nurse Practice Act this year, advanced practice nurses such as nurse practitioners and nurse midwives were granted the authority to practice autonomously and prescribe medication to patients within their scope of work.

This change, according to the Nursing Association, reflects the trust and confidence placed in the nursing profession, as well as the essential role that nurses play in providing healthcare to the CNMI community.

Students enrolled in the island's nursing schools are part of the ongoing conference, either as usherettes or receptionists and guides for visiting participants in the course of the five-day event.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial earlier designated June 14-20 as Nurses' Week, using the occasion to recognize nurses for their enormous responsibilities and hard work.

Father's Day Specials at The Palms

Pre-Father's Day Specials
Saturday, June 20, 2009

Cocktail Night 6:00 pm ~ 11:00 pm
PauPau Bar & Terrace
Cocktail Specials / Cocktail Finger Food / Beer Specials / Raffle Drawing / Live Entertainment by Maggie Naputi

Steak Night Buffet 6:00 pm ~ 9:00 pm
at Minami Restaurant
Bottomless Bud Family / Father's Day Giveaway
$30.00 adult & $15.00 child
20% local discount & San Roque Club Member Welcome

All-U-Can Eat Steak or Seafood
at Kaenju Restaurant 6:00 pm ~ 9:00 pm
Free Wine during dinner / Father's Day Giveaway
$30.00 adult & $15.00 child
20% local discount & San Roque Club Member Welcome

Father's Day Specials
Sunday, June 21, 2009

Father's Day Brunch 11:00 am ~ 2:00 pm
at Minami Restaurant
Bottomless Champagne & Beer / Father's Day Giveaway/ Raffle Drawing
$30.00 adult & $15.00 child
20% local discount & San Roque Club Member Welcome

All-U-Can Eat Steak or Seafood
at Kaenju Restaurant 6:00 pm ~ 9:00 pm
Free Wine during dinner / Father's Day Giveaway
$30.00 adult & $15.00 child
20% local discount & San Roque Club Member Welcome

For more information or reservation, please call 322-3311.

The Palms on PauPau Beach, Saipan Micronesia
PauPau BAR
Minami
KAENJU

NMC to host 'Cash for College' workshop

The Northern Marianas College will be hosting a free "Cash for College" workshop aimed at assisting students and their parents maximize college scholarship opportunities.

The workshop will be held on June 25 at the Multi-Purpose Center. The first session will be from 9am to 11am and the second will be from 5:30pm to 8pm. Participants can attend either session.

"We are really excited to be offering this type of assistance to our students," said NMC president Carmen Fernandez. "I especially encourage all those students who have just graduated from high school to attend the workshop so they can take advantage of numerous financial aid opportunities that are out there."

Those who attend the workshop will receive personal, step-by-step assistance in completing college financial aid forms for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Aid, and the CNMI Scholarship.

Staff members from the college's Office of Admissions and Records will also be present to provide information and assistance for the NMC application process.

Workshop participants will also be eligible to have their application fee and placement test fees waived for the Fall 2009 semester.

Participants are asked to bring a valid form of identification (e.g. passport, birth certificate), an official transcript from high school (at least three official copies), tax forms, and proof of CNMI residency for 2007 and 2008, including proof of continuing residency. Applicants for SHEFA must bring a voter registration card.

Participants are asked to pre-register by emailing their name, email, and phone number to oar@nmcnet.edu or by calling 234-5498 ext 1528/37 and providing this information. Pre-registration is not required. However, because of space limitations, those who pre-register will be assisted first.

For more information, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at 234-5498 ext. 1524/37, or email oar@nmcnet.edu. ***(PR)***

$10M

From Page 1

in excess of $10 million in damages, plus attorney's fees and court costs.

The lawsuit did not specifically mention the dialysis center, merely stating that the defective design was "for certain improvements to the CHC."

Former attorney general Matthew T. Gregory filed the lawsuit on behalf of the CNMI. The Alaska-based Law Offices of William R. Sattersberg Jr. also filed before the U.S. District Court for the NMI an entry of appearance to represent the CNMI in the case.

The dialysis center project started out as a $5 million undertaking in 2002 during the Babauta administration. It ballooned into to a $22-million project in the course of its five-year construction. The project was supposed to be completed in August 2004 but was actually finished in December 2007.

Gregory stated in the complaint that as an inducement for the CNMI to enter into a contract with Daly Co., the company specifically told the CNMI that it possessed the abilities and personnel necessary to design a facility that would meet all requirements.

Gregory said Daly Co. had assured that the design would be of superior quality and would meet all applicable standards.

"The design which was ultimately produced by the defendant was later determined to be defective beyond ordinarily expected and reasonably acceptable potential deficiencies," he said.

Such deficiencies, the lawyer noted, included the failure to design the CHC to meet applicable and customarily accepted code requirements, earthquake stress requirements, and other design standards ordinarily expected to exist in the quality of construction for a health center.

Gregory said that in 2003 meetings and communications took place with Daly Co. in an attempt to have the company remedy the defects.

In August 2003, the lawyer said, Daly Co. rejected its responsibilities under the contract, telling the CNMI that it would perform no remedial work on the design without more payments.

Gregory said Daly Co. gave this response despite the company's substandard work and its legal obligation to repair the deficiencies.

He said Daly Co. breached its contract with the CNMI when it failed to remedy the defects, causing the Commonwealth to sustain significant damages, including the cost of obtaining a replacement design and the delay in the completion of the building.

"In addition, the utility of the resulting facility was less than what was originally anticipated due to the deficiencies in the design, depriving the Commonwealth of the full use and benefit of the facility, as intended," the former attorney general said.

House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios disclosed last week that the House of Representatives will conduct a formal investigation on the controversial project.

REBATE

From Page 1

On May 14, Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos said rebate checks may be mailed out as early as June 15.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, in his State of the Commonwealth Address on May 27, reiterated that rebate checks will be mailed out this week.

The distribution of rebate checks this year is earlier than the distribution dates during previous years partly due to fewer tax filers.

Inos, who has been tasked by the governor to oversee all government finances, said the government cannot hold back on taxpayers' rebates.

In 2008, taxpayers began receiving their 2007 tax rebates in the mail in August.

FEDS

From Page 1

contracts, the CNMI government sued the original architectural and engineering design contractor, the Texas-based Leo A. Daly Co. ***(See main story)***

U.S. Inspector General Earl Devaney and former Public Auditor Mike Sablan, in their June 8, 2007 evaluation report, said the project's magnitude and scope had changed significantly as it evolved from a hemodialysis center to a state-of-the-art facility.

But they said changes in the scope of the project are only partially responsible for the contract modifications and time delays.

"Serious deficiencies in the contracting process, including the failure to adhere to established procurement regulations and the lack of qualified and experienced officials to administer the CIP [capital improvement projects] program, significantly affected construction costs and time frames," they said.

Some of the issues in the 2007 report were noted in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reports issued in 2003 and 2005, "but CNMI failed to use this information to improve its contracting operations," the report said.

"Had [the] CNMI used the 2003 report, for example, it might have mitigated the problems that surfaced on the project by establishing a strong contracting office and using attorneys trained in procurement regulations to provide critical guidance," the report added.

Failures

Key findings of the federal evaluation report include the lack of a strong contracting office, which impeded construction of the project from the start.

"As CNMI's CIP Contracting Office, DPW lacked the contracting expertise, such as a qualified and experienced contracting officer and cost-price analyst, to plan and administer the project. The costly modifications and delays experienced by the project as it evolved increased initial contract awards by over $7 million and delayed project completion," the report said.

The cost overruns and delays had alarmed the Legislature at the time, prompting it to ask for both OIG and OPA to evaluate the project.

In their report, OIG and OPA identified opportunities for improved performance and results.

Copies of the 2007 evaluation report were addressed to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and then Senate President Joseph M. Mendiola.

The awarding of contracts and all other procurement processes occurred during the administration of former Gov. Juan N. Babauta. At the time, the contracting officer for the project was Department of Public Works Secretary Juan Reyes.

Press secretary Charles P. Reyes said yesterday the 2007 report "provided us with lessons on how to conduct such large projects in the future."

"This administration is not responsible for project mistakes before January 2006," Reyes said.

The construction contract alone increased from $5.6 million to $12.5 million.

The CNMI also failed in key areas of the contracting process.

A strong contracting office planning and administration could have mitigated the cost overrun and delay problems that surfaced on the project and ensured compliance with CNMI's procurement regulations, the report said.

It identified five significant weaknesses in the CNMI's contracting process with regard to the project.

Specifically, CNMI officials failed to ensure that (1) contractor proposals were properly evaluated and negotiated;

(2) architectural and engineering contracts included key provisions to protect government interests;

(3) contract modifications were justified and reasonably priced;

(4) contractor nonperformance was documented and appropriate corrective action taken; and

(5) costs were properly allocated to the project.

Inadequate evaluation

The CNMI, according to the OIG/OPA report, inadequately evaluated and negotiated the contract proposals for the project.

The failure of CNMI contracting officials to comply with procurement regulations seriously compromised the evaluation and negotiation of project contractor proposals.

It is CNMI's policy to negotiate contracts for a fair and reasonable price based on demonstrated contractor competence and qualifications.

Under CNMI regulations, the evaluation team documents the selection decision by assessing the comparative strengths, weaknesses, and risks of each offeror's proposal in terms of the evaluation factors in the solicitation.

"Our analysis showed that the evaluation team included only numerical scores with minimal comments to support the scores," the report said.

The scoring system used by Summit Consulting International's evaluation team was inconsistent, it said.

One evaluator, for example, used a one to five scoring system, while a second evaluator used a zero to one scoring system.

"As a result of deficiencies in proposal evaluations, the contractors selected for the A&E and delayed claim contracts may not have been the best qualified firm," the OIG/OPA report said.

Poor negotiation practices

The CNMI did not ensure that contracts, including modifications, were negotiated for a reasonable price, as required by regulations.

The regulations outline the following types of information that must be reviewed and evaluated when determining price reasonability: (1) the independent government estimate, (2) cost information in sufficient detail to support and justify the contract, and (3) cost information for similar services.

CNMI officials stated that A&E contracts were awarded based solely on the contractor's proposed price, without any price or cost analysis or negotiations.

The report said the CNMI did not develop an independent government estimate or require the contractors to submit a detailed proposal that included a cost breakdown by labor category, labor hours, labor rates, overhead, and profit.

"Without an independent government estimate and contractor cost breakdown, CNMI could not compare labor hours with labor hours of similar projects, labor rates with labor rate surveys and contractor payroll records, and overhead rates with contractor financial records to determine the reasonability of proposed rates and negotiate a reasonable contract price," it said.

Deficient design contracts

As the project construction began, DPW officials and the initial design firm—Leo A. Daly Co.—worked to resolve design issues.

However, DPW officials said that as the project moved along, the firm failed to respond to DPW's numerous requests for information and a key principal of the design team was no longer involved with the project.

Alleged design problems began to surface, and the second A&E firm's scope of work was modified to correct design problems. The second firm was Taniguchi Ruth Architects.

To be continued.

THS

From Page 1

They were also told of Sablan's decision to overrule Hofschneider's earlier decision to fail them despite having complied with requirements.

Saipan Tribune learned that Sablan named Julian Hofschneider as acting Tinian High School principal effective yesterday. Florine Hofschneider will be transferred to the PSS central office on Saipan.

Florine Hofschneider did not return calls for comments while Sablan was still in a meeting and was not available for comments yesterday.

Students present in yesterday's meeting with Sablan were Nessie Evangelista, Dawnee Hofschneider, Liana Borja, Alex Sandbergen, Jolly Barcinas, and Marvin Kiyoshi. The six expressed relief after being told of their confirmation as high school graduates.

The issuance of diplomas to graduating Tinian High seniors was postponed last week after the six students and their parents complained about Florine Hofschneider's "unfair" decision.

"We're very happy because the commissioner did hear our side and took action on the long-time problem here in our school. It's a relief for all of us because we can now move on with our plans," Dawnee Hofschneider told *Saipan Tribune*.

Another student, Nessie Evangelista, confirmed the commissioner's decision.

Dawnee Hofschneider will move to Olympic Community College in Washington State to pursue a degree in nursing while Evangelista has been accepted at Michigan State.

The two said their parents are very happy with Sablan's immediate action, saying that, had she not intervened in their case, they may never have been able to get these educational opportunities.

According to a parent of the six students, the commissioner's decision will spell a great difference in the future of the Tinian students.

"When they informed us about the good news, we saw the relief on their faces…and we're very grateful to the commissioner for hearing the concerns and finally rectifying the long-time problem here in our Tinian high school," the parent said.

Dawnee Hofschneider and Evangelista said the commissioner told them during yesterday's meeting that their diplomas will be issued on Wednesday or Thursday this week.

The issue arose after Florine Hofschneider, who also handled some classes at the school, decided at the last minute to give failing marks to the six students. She required them to submit two last-minute makeup projects in order to get passing marks. Despite this, the six were told of her decision to fail them just a few hours before their scheduled graduation.

Alleged intoxicated customs officer fires gun

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

An alleged intoxicated female Customs officer fired her gun several times outside her residence in Kagman III early morning last month, frightening her neighbors.

The shooting happened on May 15, but police arrested Customs Officer Ramona M. Magofna only last Friday after the Superior Court issued an arrest warrant.

Magofna, 30, was arrested on charges of carrying a firearm while under the influence of alcohol, and disturbing the peace.

She was not taken to the Superior Court for a bail hearing because she immediately posted a $5,000 cash bail.

Detective Christopher Leon Guerrero stated in his report that Magofna admitted to police officers that she fired her gun because she was tired of her neighbors coming around to her house and messing up her flowers.

Leon Guerrero said the Customs officer also admitted she was intoxicated and that what she did was a violation of CNMI gun laws.

Police officers recovered at the scene a .223 rifle, 12 empty casings, and four live rounds of .223 ammunitions.

Leon Guerrero said that on May 15 at 2:15am, the Department of Public Safety received a call about gunshots at a residential area in Kagman III.

Shortly after that, the DPS and 911 emergency hotline received several other calls from Kagman residents about gunshots being heard in their area.

Responding police officers learned that the gunshots were coming from the residence of Magofna.

Magofna, who was reportedly intoxicated, told police she had just come from Koblerville where she had a drinking session with others. She allegedly admitted to the police officers that she fired her gun because she was tired of her neighbors messing up her flowers.

A witness said that when Magofna arrived, she was "concerned" about her flowers and took out her rifle from her car and fired it.

Leon Guerrero said many residents were awakened by the gunshots and went outside their homes to check out the ruckus. When more shots were fired, the neighbors ran back into their homes.

Leon Guerrero said one resident was even shaking upon hearing the gunshots because of a previous experience in Guam where a person was hit by a stray bullet.

Leon Guerrero said a house with seven children was just next door to where the shots were fired.

Three power outages hit Navy Hill, Paupau areas

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Two unscheduled power interruptions occurred Sunday and yesterday morning, affecting both business and residential areas on Navy Hill and Paupau.

The first power outage occurred at 6:18am on Sunday, affecting the Feeder 1 circuit.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. yesterday explained that after a complete inspection of the circuit, its lineman identified the problem to be a failed primary line connector in the Navy Hill area near the Tinian Guest House.

"This failure resulted in an over current ground phase to neutral short," the CUC statement said, adding that its crew replaced the failed connector and the problem was corrected in about an hour and a half.

Another unscheduled power outage occurred yesterday at 12:05am, affecting the Feeder 4/7 circuit, according to CUC.

The cause of the outage was due to a failed pole top pin near the Pau Pau Beach lateral. CUC said the problem was identified and line crew made the necessary repairs.

It was learned that the power to the first partial was restored in 43 minutes and the feeder was fully restored in an hour and 27 minutes.

However, at 12:48pm yesterday, Feeder 4/7 again lost power because an engine at Power Plant 4 had an electrical problem, which automatically shut down the unit.

Due to the immediate loss of generation, the plant operator was required to manually trip the feeder.

CUC said the arrival of new pole line hardware will now allow CUC line crews to schedule regular maintenance on the electrical grid to address the most problematic areas while still performing routine work.

The government is expected to end its $6 million contract with the Aggreko generators in September after it disclosed that CUC power plants would soon generate more than the power supply demand for the island.

At present, CUC is still in a state of emergency and still complying with the federal court's stipulated orders.

MCV's staff arrested for allegedly giving free cable, Internet services

Police arrested on Friday an employee of the Marianas Cable Vision who allegedly provided free cable and Internet services to some customers.

Fernando Callo Estella, 29, a dispatcher, was brought to the Superior Court yesterday for a bail hearing on charges of theft and theft of service.

Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo imposed a $5,000 cash bail for Estella's temporary liberty and set the preliminary hearing for June 24 at 9am.

Detective Regino M. Celis Jr. stated in his report that MCV incurred $12,561 in damages for unpaid services for both the cable boxes and Internet modems.

Celis said MCV's Mark Birmingham reported the theft to the Department of Public Safety on May 22.

The detective said that, based on Birmingham's investigation, Estella, without consent, took out several cable boxes and Internet modems. The defendant gave the items to family members and friends, allowing them to receive free premium cable channels and Internet services. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

14 students named coral reef summer interns

A total of 14 students have been selected to participate in the coral reef internship program this summer. For the next 10 weeks, interns will work on coral reef management projects at Coastal Resources Management, Division of Environmental Quality, and Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Interns assigned to CRM include Carmylyn Ogumoro, who will work in education and outreach under the mentorship of Brooke Nevitt; Steven Johnson, Kalani Reyes, and Tyler Warick, who work in coral monitoring under mentors John Starmer, Dave Benevente, and Rodney Camacho, respectively; Eric Basa, who was assigned to GIS under mentor Julie Duenas; and Chris Matias, assigned to enforcement under Gus Pangelinan.

Interns assigned to DFW are John Tudela, who will work in marine conservation under mentor Marianne Teregeyo, and Wen Hui Ye, who will focus on fisheries under mentor Mike Trianni.

Interns assigned at DEQ include Jamie Fejeran and Francisco Palacios in the areas of education and outreach under mentors Reina Camacho and Fran Castro; Sharisse Rivera, assigned to watershed management under Kathleen Herrman; Jesse Ray Deleon Guerrero, assigned to GIS under Yubert Alepuyo; Andrew Moses in the area of coral monitoring under John Iguel; and Jose Mafnas, Jr., assigned to enforcement under Kate Fuller.

The goal of the program is to provide postsecondary students with hands-on experience working in the natural resources agencies. Students are expected to conduct presentations on their coral reef projects at the end of the internship.

The program is annual and is open to high school graduates. For more information, contact Brooke Nevitt at 664-8320. ***(PR)***

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65th Battles of Saipan and Tinian Commemoration

Saipan Southern High School JROTC cadets present the colors at the 65th commemoration of the Battle of Saipan, held at the Flag Circle and Court of Honor at the American Memorial Park in Garapan on Sunday.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Major Greg Sablan of the U.S. Army Reserve's 442nd Infantry Echo introduces the keynote speaker, Rear Admiral William D. French, at the 65th commemoration of the Battle of Saipan.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Rear Admiral William D. French, commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, delivers his keynote address at the 65th commemoration of the Battle of Saipan on Sunday at the Flag Circle and Court of Honor at the American Memorial Park in Garapan. French's father was one of those who fought at the Battle of Saipan, from June 15, 1944 to July 9, 1944.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Acting Gov. Eloy Inos delivers his remarks at the 65th commemoration of the Battle of Saipan.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Acting Gov. Eloy S. Inos presents a medal to one of the five visiting veterans of the June 15, 1944 to July 9, 1944 Battle of Saipan, which helped end World War II.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Rear Admiral William D. French, the outgoing commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, right, and five visiting veterans who fought in the Battle of Saipan from June 15, 1944 to July 9, 1944, join the 65th commemoration of the Marianas campaign, on Sunday.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Members of the audience at Sunday's 65th commemoration of the Marianas campaign during World War II.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A Saipan Southern High School JROTC cadet stands at attention beside a wreath at Sunday's 65th commemoration of the Battle of Saipan during World War II, held at the Flag Circle and Court of Honor at the American Memorial Park in Garapan.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Acting Gov. Eloy Inos, left, joins visiting veterans who fought in the Battle of Saipan from June 15, 1944 to July 9, 1944, including, Joe Olivera, partly hidden, Ken Stinson, front right, Lyman Franklin, and Marven Avilla in laying a wreath at the Flag Circle and Court of Honor at the American Memorial Park in Garapan on Sunday for the 65th commemoration of the Marianas campaign during World War II.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

CNMI works with OIA, BEA on annual GDP data

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Fitial administration said it is working with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis in developing a mechanism to provide annual gross domestic product statistics for the CNMI.

OIA and BEA recently signed a memorandum of understanding to establish relationships and develop the GDP reporting mechanism to integrate the four U.S. insular areas—the CNMI, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam—into annual national income and product accounts.

In a statement yesterday, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial noted the significance of the historic effort by OIA and BEA to produce important statistical information that would be useful to the U.S. Congress and other federal policymakers when dealing with CNMI issues.

"In the past, federal policy makers often lacked reliable economic data to better guide federal policy in the islands," said Fitial.

The governor is now in Utah to attend the Western Governors Association annual meeting.

In a statement, Fitial thanked OIA's and BEA's efforts by referencing OIA director Nikolao I. Pula's May 21, 2008, statement before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Information Policy.

"OIA Director Pula clearly highlighted the shortage of current, reliable data on the U.S. territories in his message to the U.S. Congress. This MOU between OIA and BEA is a step in the right direction," the governor said.

The MOU will provide training for all CNMI contact offices and eventual surveys for annual updating of the GDP reports for the CNMI.

Richard A. Pierce, the governor's special assistant for trade relations and economic affairs, is coordinating the initial meetings between OIA's Dr. Wali Osman and BEA's Brian Moyer, Nicole Mayerhauser and Aya Hamano.

The OIA and BEA representatives met with acting Gov. Eloy Inos on Friday for a project description and de-briefing.

All parties also met last week with officials from the CNMI Department of Commerce and its Central Statistics Division, Department of Finance's Customs Division and Electronic Data Processing Division, the Marianas Visitors Authority, the Commonwealth Ports Authority and the Commonwealth Development Authority, among other relevant agencies.

USS *Thach* visits Saipan for 4-day R&R

USS *Thach* is on Saipan with its 230 crew for a four-day rest and recreation visit from June 14-17.

The navy ship's captain, Commander David W. Haas, joined the commemoration rites for the 65th anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian on Sunday afternoon at the Court of Honor of the American Memorial Park.

Haas and his crew also worked with the American Red Cross yesterday on a community relations project.

CNMI Veterans and Military Affairs executive director Ruth Coleman said the some of the vessel's crew were set to hold first aid training and repair activities at the warehouse of the American Red Cross.

Haas and some of his crew met with members of the CNMI Veterans of Foreign Wars led by incoming Commander Larry Guerrero, as well as with government officials. They were scheduled to exchange plaques at Hard Rock Café last night.

USS *Thach* is a frigate named for Admiral John Thach (1905-1981), a naval aviator during World War II and inventor of the Thach Weave dog-fighting tactic.

Launched on Dec. 18, 1982, the ship's mission is to provide anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine protection for carrier battle groups, naval expeditionary forces, replenishment groups, convoys and other military and merchant shipping.

The ship's homeport is San Diego Naval Base and is part of Destroyer Squadron 7. ***(Nazario Rodriguez Jr.)***

Members of the USS *Thach* have their picture taken with American Red Cross executive director John Hirsh. The soldiers took time off yesterday to do some community service work with members of the NMI Chapter.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jobless for 4 years, guest worker sues Labor

A foreign national who has been jobless for four straight years has sued the Department of Labor for denying his claim for unpaid wages and request to seek an employer.

Feroz Al-Mamun, a Bangladeshi, sued the Labor Secretary and Misamis Corp. that owns the Misamis Construction (Saipan) Ltd. He filed the petition for judicial review without a lawyer.

Al-Mamun asked the Superior Court to reverse and set aside the orders issued by Labor administrative hearing officer Deanne Siemer and Labor Secretary Gil M. San Nicolas.

The plaintiff asked the court to order Labor and Misamis Construction to pay him unpaid wages and remand his complaint to Labor for further hearing on the wages owed him.

Al-Mamun had filed a Labor complaint against his former employer, Misamis Construction, for unpaid wages. Siemer denied his wage claim and his request to transfer to a new employer. Siemer then denied his motion for reconsideration in July 2008.

Al-Mamun appealed to Labor Secretary San Nicolas. But the Secretary last month affirmed Siemer's decisions.

San Nicolas affirmed Siemer's determination that unemployment for more than four straight years is sufficient evidence that Al-Mamun does not meet the criteria of the Nonresident Workers Act for a transfer to remain in the CNMI.

San Nicolas ruled that Al-Mamun has offered no basis on which to rescind Siemer's findings.

But in his lawsuit, Al-Mamun asserted that the Labor orders were erroneous. He cited that the errors include wrongly placing the burden on the employee rather than the employer to maintain documentation of wage payments.

Al-Mamun also alleged that Labor applied the wrong standard for transfer relief. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

FSA's county committee nominations begin

MAITE, Guam—Tom Camacho, executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency for Guam and CNMI announced last week that farmer and rancher candidate nominations was set to begin yesterday, June 15, for local Farm Service Agency county committees. The nomination period continues through Aug. 3, 2009. Elections take place this fall.

"I encourage all producers to participate in the county committee election process by nominating candidates by the August 3rd deadline," said Camacho. "We are counting on as much participation as possible, because county committees are an important link between the farm community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We have seen a trend in recent years of increased nominations of minority and women producers and we hope that will continue."

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area in which the person is a candidate.

Producers may also nominate themselves, and organizations representing minority and women may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and other valuable information about FSA county committee elections are available online at http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=cce.

Nomination forms for the 2009 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2009.

FSA county committee members make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs and other important agricultural issues. Members serve three-year terms. Nationwide, there are more than 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. Committees consist of three to five members who are elected by eligible local producers.

FSA will mail ballots to producers beginning Nov. 6. The voted ballots are due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 7, 2009.

Newly elected committee members and alternates take office Jan. 1, 2010.

Find FSA news releases on the agency's Web site at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov. ***(USDA)***

BEFORE THE
COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

NOTICE OF SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission will conduct a special business meeting at 10:00 a.m. on June 20, 2009 at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce Conference Room. The meeting will consider the following agenda:

1. **Call to order – quorum.**
2. **Approval of minutes of April 2, 2009 meeting.**
3. **Docket 09-2. Reconsideration of increase in CUC wastewater rates.**
4. **Docket 09-4 [Cable regulation]: Hearing examiner's report.**
5. **Administration:**
   - FY10 Administrative budget
   - Other business

Documents related to the agenda are posted on the Chamber's website at **www.saipanchamber.com.** Questions regarding the meeting should be referred to Commissioner Calabrese, whose phone number is 233-7150.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500
FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com
Website:cpa.gov.mp

SUMMER INTERNSHIP

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is pleased to announce that a Summer Internship Program is available for Engineering, Architectural and Accounting students. Applicants must have completed 1 year of University level courses from a U.S. accredited university.

The Summer Internship program is for approximately 2 months. Interested students are encouraged to apply at the CPA's Administration Office (2nd floor Arrival Wing) or CPA's Human Resource Office (2nd Floor Departure Wing) of the Saipan International Airport, or it may be downloaded by visiting CPA's website at www.cpa.gov.mp

EFRAIN F. CAMACHO, P.E.
Executive Director

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-DOC-106

SUBMISSION: JUNE 29, 2009 • TIME: 4:00 P.M.

"GRANT WRITERS FOR PURPOSES OF PURSUING FUNDING AVAILABLE THROUGH THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINESTMENT ACT OF 2009 (ARRA)"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MR. MICHAEL ADA, SECRETARY OF COMMERCE VIA E-MAIL TO depcommerce.ada@gmail.com OR FAX TO (670) 664-3067 NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, JUNE 18, 2009.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERECED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **MICHAEL ADA**
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-DOC-105

SUBMISSION: JUNE 29, 2009 • TIME: 4:00 P.M.

"PROJECT MANAGERS TO MANAGE PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009 (ARRA)"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MR. MICHAEL ADA, SECRETARY OF COMMERCE VIA E-MAIL TO depcommerce.ada@gmail.com OR FAX TO (670) 664-3067 NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, JUNE 18, 2009.**

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/s/ **MICHAEL ADA**
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

The battle for Saipan

By CARL W. MATTHEWS
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from The Feather Merchant, *written by the author. Matthews was in the first wave of Marines to land on Blue Beach to begin the invasion of Saipan. He was 19 at that time. He currently resides in Cedar Hill, Texas. The CNMI marks this week the 65th anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian.*

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The author points to a picture taken of the attack on the Chalan Kanoa Beach. The picture now hangs in the Saipan exhibit at the National Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, VA. Other picture shows the picture in larger detail.

The next morning, reveille came early aboard our anchored LST. We dressed in our cleanest underwear, dungarees, and socks to reduce infection should we be wounded with shell fragments. The usual breakfast of steak and eggs was waiting in the little LST galley and we took our food on deck to eat. We could see the blasts of shells leaving the battleships, cruisers, destroyers, etc. to bombard the island. Sometimes, we could hear see the blast on shore as the shells landed. Such shelling must have created panic among the innocent islanders, most of whom had left their homes in Chalan Kanoa and Garapan and flew to caves in the hills and mountains. Some Japanese were caught by this naval gunfire, but most were hiding deep in caves or underground bunkers.

We had packed our seabags the previous evening. Wendell Nightingale had decided to learn to smoke while we were aboard the LST. He was 19, but had never smoked in his life. Smoking was something which his family would not approve. His seabag was fully packed except for a carton of cigarettes he had purchase when we had PX rights. He looked at that carton, looked at me, and asked if I would pack them in my seabag. He explained that, should something happen to him, and if the Marine Corps sent his seabag home, he did not want his mother to open the seabag and see the cigarettes.

Soon, the order came to take our places in the Amphibious Tractors (AmTrac) located in the space below deck. The huge front doors of the LST had been opened and the large ramp dropped into the water. Every Marine knew exactly which AmTrac he would use, and exactly where he would stand. We had several drills to perform this exercise while at sea. Mr. Leary had prepared a checklist for every Marine in his platoon, and he did a painstaking inspection of everyone to make sure we were carrying every item required: clean dungarees, leggings, rifle, rifle belt, filled canteen, first aid pack, steel helmet, bayonet, small radio, semaphore flags, folding shovel, several pencils, and a pocket sizes notebook on which to write messages. The backpack contained one set of underwear, three pairs of socks, K-rations, poncho. I also carried an extra filled canteen, and roll of toilet paper. I had also attached a hunting knife sheath to the legging on my right leg. The knife handle, fastened with a leather snap, protruded above the legging.

One by one, the AmTracs lumbered down the LST ramp and into the water to make their way to the rendezvous area, well out of range of Japanese fire. The minutes spent in the rendezvous seemed like hours. Several of the Marines became seasick as we bobbed in the water waiting for the signal to go to the beach. Daylight had arrived and we could see the island before us. When all the AmTracs were in the water, they began to form a line parallel to the beach, but still out of range of the Japanese guns. When the line was formed, the signal was given to make for the beach. Mr. Leary and I stood side by side at the front of the AmTrac, but said little, both with thoughts of what lay ahead, thoughts of home and family. We began to make out landmarks on the beach as we grew closer. Yes, there was the smokestack on our left, exactly where it was supposed to be. And there was the concrete Sugar Dock that extended out from the Chalan Kanoa beach. We could make out the white beaches and the heavy green growth behind.

We began to see huge geysers in the water ahead of us, made by exploding shells from Japanese guns. Suddenly all the AmTracs were in range of the Japanese guns. Moments later, I was watching as one of the Japanese shells made a direct hit on one of the AmTracs and it disintegrated. All AmTracs continued grinding toward the beach. Several times we could feel and hear the tracts of the AmTrac grinding over the coral reefs that extended far out from the beach. Then, we reached the beach. Our AmTrac was supposed to carry us far beyond the beach area, but when we arrived there, the path was blocked by a steep bank and trees so large and so thick that penetration would have been impossible. Mr. Leary quickly gave the order to get out of the AmTrac. Japanese shells were landing in every direction. We could not have remained on the beach longer than 60-90 seconds. Mr. Leary was yelling for us to get off that beach.

■■■

During the brief period, between our exit from the AmTrac and our scramble up the bank on the beach, a combat photographer took a photo of our platoon. The photo shows the AmTrac from which we had exited. Mr. Leary is standing in front of the AmTrac, I am kneeling in front of him, Wendell Nightingale is kneeling in front of me. Through the years, the photo was widely distributed in books and other places. I had seen small photos, but the detail was so small that identifying anyone in the photo was impossible. Identification of three Marines in the photo came about with a series of strange coincidences in 2004. When I first viewed the enlarged photo, I recognized objects and features that convinced me as to the identity of the three Marines. The following year, a member of the U. S. Parks Department, using digital imagery, made positive identification. An enlarged copy of the photo hangs in the Saipan Exhibit at the National Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, Virginia.

■■■

We scrambled up the steep area of the beach and into the treed area. The heavily treed area quickly changed into an open area with a few coconut trees. One Japanese shell landed on our left flank, killing three men from supply. Moments later, Whitte from Desdemona, Texas, fell. He was hit with a sniper bullet to the head. Someone saw the sniper in one of the coconut trees and quickly took him out. The Japanese soldier fell from his perch. We crossed a long trench that appeared to have been recently dug. We did not go to Whitte. We had been trained never to go to a wounded comrade. Marines who stopped to comfort or mourn often became casualties themselves. We were moving into Chalan Kanoa when we heard the sound of tanks. Our tanks had not been scheduled to land until later, and we assumed the coming tanks to be Japanese. There was no place to take cover and have protection from tanks. Mr. Leary yelled an order to go back to the trench we had crossed. Mr. Leary and I had been in the lead, but I must have been the first to arrive to the safety of the trench. When the tanks came in sight, it became life's most beautiful moment. They were our tanks that had landed early. Our Day 1 objective was to reach the eastern edge of Chalan Kanoa and the bank of a dry swamp. We had reached our objective by mid-afternoon, taking out several snipers, and checking out small structures on our way. Heavy foliage bordered the swamp and we remained just inside the foliage. We could see out, but remained pretty well hidden from any view by the enemy.

The Japanese had constructed a huge concrete bunker in the area and we set up our platoon command post at that point. The heavy shelling never ceased all day long and continued into the night. Fortunately for the 2nd Platoon, none fell in our immediate area. And we received no rifle or machinegun fire. We could hear the noise of battle on our right flank and even more noise on the left, the area where the Second Marine Division had landed. We could see across the swamp. Nothing was moving as far as our eyes could see. We had apparently taken out all Japanese troops in the area we had covered reaching our objective and were having no problem with being attacked from the rear. I remained alert, cautious and watchful, but consuming the contents of a box of K-rations when I noticed some wires on the ground that led to the Japanese bunker. I stopped eating sufficiently long to cut the wires. Late that afternoon, an artillery battalion brought one of their big guns and set up a few yards to our rear. However, they did not fire a single shot that day or night. It could have been that there was no target for them at the moment, and that they had been set up to cover our advance the following day.

Most of G-Company experienced a relatively quiet night. I used the term "most." One of the platoons on our right flank played host to a number of Japanese who arrived in the darkness of the early morning, yelling "Banzai, Banzai, Banzai!" Someone said that John Criner, a huge Marine, was heard yelling back, "Banzai yourself, you SOBs!" as he emptied his BAR again and again. We could hear the shooting and the screams, but our platoon was never attacked.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

June 16, 1999

Tinian moves to stop Rota's casino plan
Tinian lawmakers will offer a legislative initiative forbidding Rota to establish its own casino operations in a move that observers believe will throw Saipan legislators right into the growing rift between the two island municipalities. Sen. Joaquin G. Adriano is set to introduce the legislation making the high-roller gambling business exclusive to Tinian in a bid to stop the Rota delegation from pressing its own initiative on the establishment of casino on the island. The Republican senator from Tinian said he would file the measure at the next Senate session unless his colleagues from Rota decide to scrap their casino proposal.

Hillblom estate settles $9.5 million tax obligation
Bank of Saipan, which serves as the executor of the Larry Hillblom estate, yesterday turned over to the Department of Finance a $9.5 million worth of check representing payment of the Estate's tax obligations to the government. BOS director Ben Fitial handed the check to finance officials during a simple ceremony at the Governor's Office in Capitol Hill. The tax settlement is contained in a recent agreement between the Executor and the government pertaining to the tax liabilities of the Estate.

June 16, 2000

Housing program failed to help poor
The current housing loan program funded by money from the Marianas Public Land Trust has failed to assist indigent or low income families of Northern Marianas descent due to high interest rates, according to Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider who is now seeking to turn around the system. He has asked for thorough review by the House of Representatives on a bill that will provide additional $3.8 million to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation to continue the program. The funding will come from the $10 million loan package extended by MPLT in 1995, but the Legislature needs to pass the measure to allow NMHC to repay the debt through the annual revenues the land trust divest into the Commonwealth treasury.

Chamber presses for lifting of 3-year limit
Businesses yesterday emphasized to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio the urgency of creating an investment-friendly climate in the CNMI by repealing laws which hamper the growth of business in the Northern Marianas. Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Lynn Knight said representatives from different businesses pressed for the lifting of the three-year stay limit imposed on nonresident workers during a dialogue with the governor. The three-year limit was signed into law in 1999 and the effect of the law will be felt in March 2001 by the private sector. "We do not want to wait until that time to remind everybody what that bill will bring to the business community," Ms. Knight said.

June 16, 2003

Landowners bugging MPLA
The Marianas Public Lands Authority gets an average of 10-15 complaints a day from landowners whose lands have long been taken by the government but have not been paid yet. "We're receiving calls from impatient landowners. Well, actually they are very patient landowners who have become frustrated," said MPLA commissioner Henry S. Hofschneider. He said some of these landowners cited urgent financial needs for medical treatment and other emergencies. "Some of them need to undergo long treatment so they really need money. Some are already in tight financial situation because of the current economy," said Hofschneider.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Retirement group meeting today

There will be a special meeting of the newly formed Commonwealth Retirement Association today, June 16, 2009, at 6pm, in the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. The association is made up of all working and retired members of the original Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Program, now referred to as the Defined Benefit Plan. Election of board of directors will take place. For additional information, call 234-6858 or 322-4785. ***(PR)***

ChaCha to issue report cards

Student report cards will be issued out this Friday, June 19, 2009. Distribution is from 8:30am to 12pm and from 1:30 to 4:30pm in the main office. Should you have any questions, call the office at 2377-3921 or 664-4100. ***(PR)***

Discounted rate at PIC this Saturday

In honor of this past weekend's dog show, Pacific Islands Club is hosting a PAWS Day at the PIC Waterpark this Saturday, June 20. On this day, PIC Waterpark passes will be sold at a rate of $10, a discount of 50 percent. All proceeds will go to PAWS.

"This is a great opportunity for families to spend a day together on the river or splash about in the big pool, all the while helping a great non-profit organization," said PAWS president Katie Busenkell. "Better yet, what a great opportunity for parents to take some time off by dropping the children off at the Waterpark for a long afternoon!"

For more information on this event, call PIC at 234-7976 or call PAWS at 285-PAWS. ***(PR)***

Live fire releases set on FDM

The U.S. military will be conducting live fire releases on the island of Farallon de Mendenilla all week, according to the Emergency Management Office. These live fire releases will be held from June 14 to June 18, from 4am to 2am, and June 18 to June 21, from 8am to 1am. There will be another round of live fire releases from June 20 to June 21, from 1pm to 7pm.

The general location of this activity will be the Farallon de Mendenilla Training Area (R7201) on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, EMO is urging the public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the times and dates indicated.

For more information, contact EMO Operations Section at 322-9528 and 322-9529 or VHF MARINE CHNL 16, HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. Dial CNMI 211 for this advisory. ***(PR)***

Korean language school at NMC

The Korean Cultural Center is opening a Korean language school as part of the Community Development Institute of Northern Marianas College.

The promotional fee is $60 for six weeks of language instruction at the beginning and intermediate levels. Lessons in Korean culture are included and basic course materials are provided. Certificates will be awarded for completion upon request.

Classes will be on Tuesdays and Fridays, beginning at 6:30pm on June 19. For more information, go to the P building on the NMC campus during the working hours, call Daniel Huh at 285-2221, or email korean2221@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Summer classes at Ladera International School

Ladera International School of Saipan has opened its summer program to students from grades first to eleventh in the subjects English, math, and social studies.

LISS director Wayne Pangelinan said the first summer school session has already begun, and the second session begins on July 6. Interested parents who wish to enroll their children for this second session should call the school to check for available spots in the classes.

LISS accepts international students as well as local students. ***(PR)***

John Gonzales Live schedule for June

June 17, 2009 *LIVE* – Replays 6/21 and 6/25 @ 7-8 pm

■ Amnesty for Pesticide Use: Division of Environmental Quality officials

Shows Air on KSPN Channel 2. *LIVE* Text: 285-META; *LIVE* Call: 287-4230; E-mail: johngonzales@pticom.com. ***(PR)***

Saipan Southern High summer class schedule

Saipan Southern High School will be holding summer school classes from June 22 to July 31, 2009. First session is from 8am to 12pm and second session is from 12:30pm to 4:30pm. Seating is limited and is available on first-come, first served basis. Class is open to all public school students. Please come and see the counselors to register. ***(PR)***

Petition to suspend zoning law being circulated

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A petition urging the suspension of the Saipan Zoning Act is now being circulated by businesses who believe that, although the law has its merits and noble intentions, there is no quantifiable evidence showing that the legislative findings used to justify the law's enactment have been satisfied.

The two-page petition, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune*, urges officers and members of the Saipan legislative delegation to enact a new law suspending the Zoning Act. Petitioners aim to gather 3,000 signatures before finally presenting it to lawmakers.

The petition states that the Act failed to simplify and streamline the zoning law to fit the realities of Saipan's relatively small, rural, and uncomplicated social, physical and development environment as well as the Zoning board's limited administrative capabilities.

According to the petition, the Zoning Office fails to issue permits in a timely manner and administer the regulations fairly.

"Businesses have and continue to experience below par services. …In fact, business has yet to enjoy 'improved coordination' with the One Start and other regulatory process at enhancing regulatory services or be issued permits in a timely manner," the petition stated.

For example, businesses said, clients have complained of delayed approvals from Zoning for a simple business license renewal involving house rental or consulting services firm.

The petition also scored the board's decision to hire an applicant from Arizona from a list of 19 other applicants who have applied for the Zoning administrator post.

"How is the Zoning board supposed to encourage the development of employment areas when the board itself does not subscribe to promoting the same within its office?" the petition asked.

Rep. Tina Sablan, a member of the Saipan legislative delegation, said the concerns of the petition organizers should certainly be looked into. However, she is convinced the law was passed with enough proof or justification.

"At this point I am not convinced that enough justification has been provided for suspending the statute in its entirety, but I do believe that there is room for improvement, and I would support convening public hearings to consider all the issues that have recently been raised by the implementation of the zoning law. These issues include unreasonable delays in permit approvals, inconsistent and sometimes absurd restrictions on signage, and unduly burdensome and discouraging requirements imposed on small businesses and particularly home businesses," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

The lawmaker said the zoning administrator position is a critical and highly technical position, expressing hope that the board carefully reviewed the qualifications of each of the applicants and selected the best person for the job.

"There are clearly very serious concerns and complaints about how the law is presently being implemented. We should all want to have the best, most qualified person leading and managing that agency and navigating through the process of improving the law and the way it is enforced," she added.

Press secretary Charles Reyes Jr. said the administration recognizes that the Zoning office may be understaffed and is looking at providing needed resources.

"We also respect and welcome the concerns of the business community and the general public. The business community is free to call for legislative changes and may appeal to the Legislature for a change in the zoning law. We believe the zoning law passed because there was strong public support for such legislation; however, if public support for such regulations has receded, then our leaders may consider a policy change based on public opinion and the merits of the arguments," Reyes said.

Zoning office's Henry Hofschneider said the board will issue an official statement on the petition to suspend the zoning law.

$1M budget cut may force NMC to cut key academic programs

From left, Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, and NMC Board of Regents members Dr. Rita Inos and Janet King at yesterday's hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee on NMC's Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez asked members of the House Ways and Means Committee yesterday to reinstate the $1 million that the Fitial administration cut from NMC's proposed Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

NMC asked for a $6 million budget, but the governor's submission reflected only a $5 million budget for the college.

In an interview after the budget hearing in the House chamber on Capital Hill, Fernandez said NMC—which is already operating on a tight budget—may be forced to cut its academic programs if the $1 million is not reinstated.

"The reality is that there'll be nothing else to cut and we are already operating on a lean budget to operate the college," she said.

She said this means the critical academic programs such as nursing, education, business and criminal justice may have to be cut through a program prioritization process.

Committee chair Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan) said the panel will be reviewing NMC's budget proposal, but would like to know more information about the college, including enrollment, federal funding and receivables from students.

Fernandez said NMC's receivables from students now stand at $1.5 million compared to previous years, which reached $3 million. She said an aggressive collection effort has been instrumental in the drop in receivables from students.

Rep. Stanley Torres (R-Saipan) asked Fernandez several times about NMC's legal expenses, which the college president said is budgeted at $45,000 a year. She said contracting out for legal services is less costly than maintaining a full-time legal counsel.

NMC Board of Regents members Dr. Rita Inos and Janet King, as well as other NMC personnel, were also present at the budget hearing. Besides Yumul, Reps. Stanley Torres and Ralph Torres, other committee members present were House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios (R-Saipan), Rep. Justo Quitugua (D-Saipan), Rep. Joe Reyes (R-Saipan), and Rep. Ray Tebuteb (R-Saipan).

Fernandez also told lawmakers that NMC will know by the end of this month the decision of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges whether to continue the college's accreditation.

When asked by Rep. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) about the result of her recent trip for the WASC accreditation, Fernandez said the decision is still "confidential."

But Fenandez said in an interview that NMC "got a very positive response" from WASC.

NMC was placed on continued show-cause status because of two WASC recommendations that were left unaddressed. There were a total of six recommendations.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Say no to censorship

The interface looks harmless enough: a rabbit in a green field gazing up at an array of computer-related icons. But Green Dam-Youth Escort, the program the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology wants to mandate for every computer shipped to China as of July 1, is the worst kind of spyware.

Created through state sponsorship at a cost of nearly $6 million, the program is ostensibly no more than a filter to protect children from inappropriate Web content. But examination reveals that it censors far more. Green Dam maintains a database of censored political terms and sites far larger than its list of pornographic materials. Beyond Web censorship, it shuts down word processing programs whenever users type "Falun Gong," prevents the sending of e-mails whose content it deems incendiary, maintains a record of users' Internet activity and remains active even after being shut down. Such software far exceeds anything needed to protect children and provides the government with unparalleled ability to monitor and control users' access to information.

Computer manufacturers need to say no. Aside from the pragmatic concerns, the software is poorly programmed in ways that could render the entire Chinese computer system vulnerable to hackers. Bundling it with every personal computer would be irresponsible for its effect on consumers. The precedent this sets for state censorship is deeply troubling. Situating the locus of censorship in the PC as opposed to a central network restriction or firewall that users could evade is an unheard-of step for state monitoring with dire implications for the freedom of Chinese computer users.

The facts that the deadline is so early, that the software is so vulnerable and that 80 percent of Chinese consumers polled have already declared their unwillingness to use it will make it easier for manufacturers to push back against the ministry's demands. But any short-term success must lead to a broader conversation about the obligation of multinational corporations to protect free speech and free access to information. China's 1.3 billion computer users are a seductive market, and without an industry-wide commitment, a restriction rejected by one manufacturer might be accepted by another. In this case, China's demands are both impractical and unjust. Western companies should refuse to meet them, and not only on pragmatic grounds. A unified statement of principle is needed.

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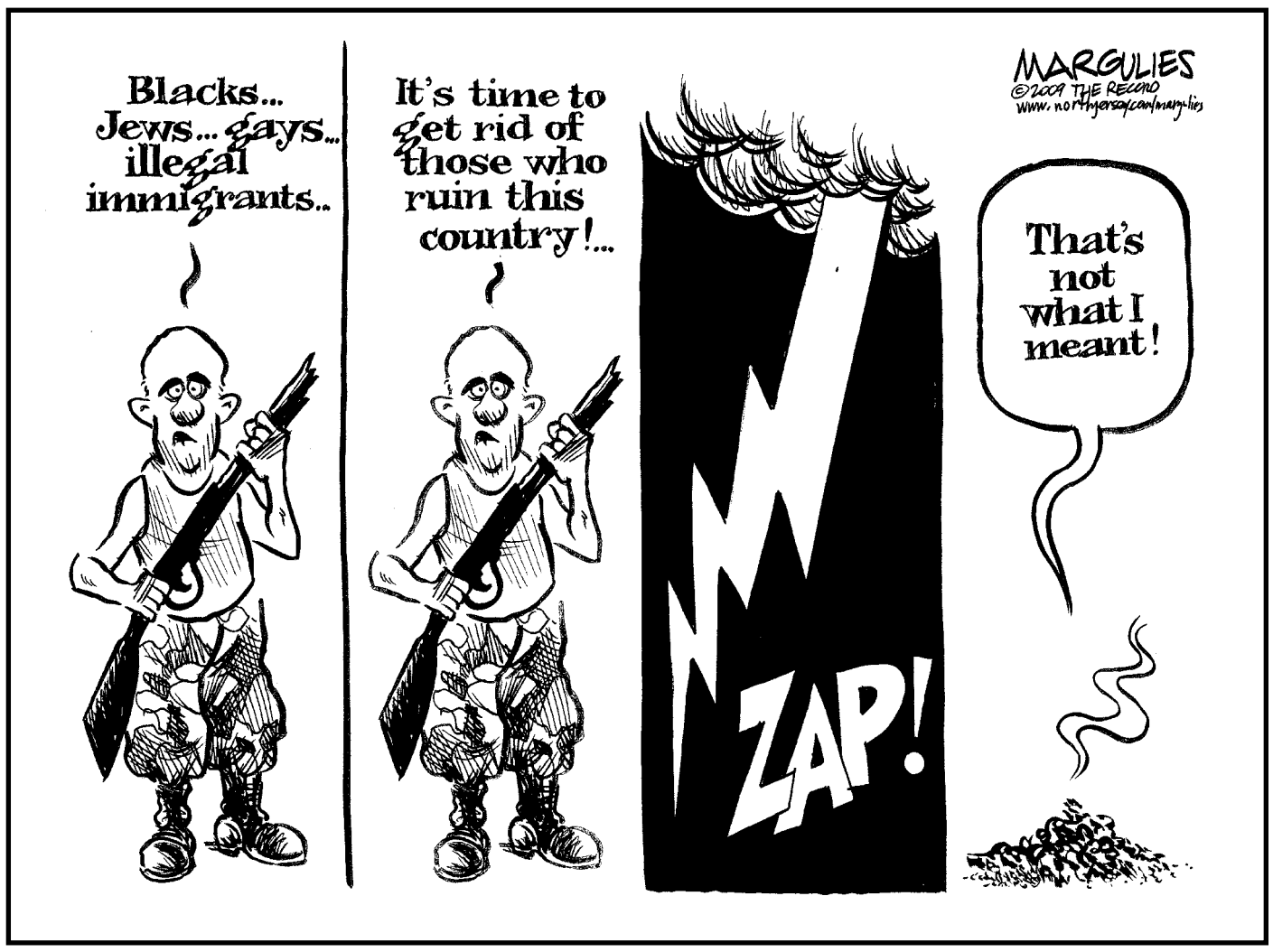

An auto rescue that overreached?

By CHARLES LANE
(c) 2009, The Washington Post

The writer is a member of The Washington Post*'s editorial page staff.*

Nationalizing General Motors, and part of Chrysler, may or may not turn out to be a good deal for the taxpayers. I have a different concern, though: Was it constitutional?

With hundreds of thousands of jobs on the line, this may seem a churlish question. Then again, the temptation to bend the rules of democracy is always greatest in a crisis. It wasn't so long ago that a president claimed the power to do all sorts of questionable things—from waterboarding to electronic surveillance—because the country faced a crisis.

Bailing out Detroit is not in the same category, morally, as torture. Still, a presidential decision to federalize a vast sector of the U.S. economy affects the country's vital interests and, potentially, the rights of its citizens. Such an extraordinary measure should rest on the firmest possible foundation of democratic legitimacy. Does President Obama's rescue of GM and Chrysler meet the test?

The classic statement on such matters comes from Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson's opinion in a case about another crisis-driven assertion of executive power: President Truman's seizure of steel mills in 1952. Truman wanted to prevent a strike during the Korean War; the court blocked him.

In Jackson's analysis, the president's power is at its "maximum" when he "acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization of Congress." The Obama administration argues that it has such authority today, under the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of Oct. 3, 2008. This law established the $700 billion Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP), the source of the $30 billion the Obama administration pumped into GM as well as the $8 billion it has committed to Chrysler.

The only problem is that the law doesn't give "express" authority to buy a car company. At the time Congress approved TARP—grudgingly—everyone assumed it was to buy up Wall Street's toxic mortgage-backed securities, which are the only class of assets named in the law. (The law did contemplate other, unspecified asset purchases.) The statute says that "financial institutions"—defined as banks, savings associations, credit unions, security broker-dealers and insurance companies—can get aid.

What about "implicit" authority? The law says its definition of financial institutions is "not limited to" banks. The Obama administration emphasized this point to the Supreme Court in a memorandum defending its actions against Indiana pension funds that hold Chrysler bonds. And GM and Chrysler do finance dealer inventories and consumer purchases, a bank-like function.

But if Congress meant TARP for the auto companies, then why did it leave them off the law's list of "financial institutions"? Why did it spend much of December trying—and failing—to pass a separate auto bailout? In its court filing, the Obama administration insists that Treasury's interpretation of the law's "ambiguous" definition is "entitled to judicial deference." In other words, if Treasury wants to call a car company a bank for the sake of the economy, the courts should let it.

Yes, the law's purpose was to "restore liquidity and stability to the financial system of the United States," and saving GM and Chrysler might do that. But the administration's argument comes dangerously close to reading "by any means necessary" into the law.

So were the Indiana pension funds right? Not quite. It's true that, according to Jackson, executive power is "at its lowest ebb" when the president's action is "incompatible with the expressed or implied will of Congress." But, even if the GM-Chrysler deal doesn't fit the language of the law, it's not necessarily "incompatible" with Congress' will.

Indeed, when the auto companies began collapsing in December, Democratic leaders in Congress urged the Bush administration to save them with TARP money. Though they duly buttressed this demand with a legal opinion from none other than the acting comptroller general, basically it was opportunistic: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi preferred to use TARP rather than the Bush administration's choice: previously authorized energy-efficiency loans.

Still, with its proposal going nowhere in Congress, a presidential transition at hand and Detroit tanking, the Bush administration relented; it released $17.4 billion from TARP loans to GM and Chrysler. This set a precedent for Obama, which the Democratic Congress has cheerfully allowed to stand.

A political veteran as well as a constitutional scholar, Jackson anticipated situations like this. He described "a zone of twilight" in which "the President acts in absence of either a congressional grant or denial of authority" because "congressional inertia, indifference or quiescence may sometimes, at least, as a practical matter, enable, if not invite, measures on independent presidential responsibility."

In other words, sometimes the president can get away with stretching his authority because Congress would rather not be held accountable for formally defining it.

The GM-Chrysler deals appear to be such an instance. But the constitutional ambiguity surrounding this use of TARP may prove tolerable only as long as the policy itself is. If GM and Chrysler start gobbling up even more funds—or if additional non-financial companies get bailouts—more Americans might question the president's power to select certain firms for federal rescue. Fortunately, the TARP statute expires at the end of this year. Let's hope the next version is a little less open to interpretation.

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IF ALL ELSE FAILS

Could government bankruptcy ever be an option for the Fund?

One of the many comments made by the government's attorney during the court proceedings relative to the Retirement Fund's lawsuit against the central government was: "There were no funds to pay."

I arrived at essentially the same conclusion in a letter to the editor which appeared in this paper on March 27, 2009 (see the *Saipan Tribune* archives of that date).

If the government can't pay the Fund what it owes based upon an agreed schedule of serial repayments (with severe penalties automatically triggered for non-compliance), then bankruptcy and liquidation of some of its assets looms as an alternative to clear the debt over a reasonable period of time, of course.

But one must be realistic and accept the fact that the government has a wider obligation to the community at large and it is ridiculous to think that the government will shut down. It can't—and it won't.

What could result from a declaration of bankruptcy is a court-supervised reorganization plan to pay the debt over time without serious disruption to essential government services. Such a process could empower the court or its appointed receiver to oversee the administration of the bankruptcy process.

One benefit that would appear to result is to finally arrive at a mechanism to reduce the size of government—something that has been advocated by many but never realized primarily because of the obvious political pressure to maintain a bloated government as an employment service. Thus, one benefit derived from a bankruptcy's reorganization plan—an "intended" consequence, one might say—would be to force a recalcitrant government to do something it is otherwise loath to do: reduce its payroll expenses.

The government needs money; about that there can be no doubt. The question is how to get it under the presently deteriorating economy. My suggestion is to hire an expert in economic development (There are such people, believe it or not). Let the individual work with the local business community—breath new life into the free trade zone concept and develop a dynamic foreign investment promotion program—and for God's sake leave the development expert alone to work without the usual nitpicking, micromanaging burdensome interference so very often in evidence by the Legislature and "turf protecting" bureaucrats.

Recalling the advice of my dear sweet granny, "There are only two ways to make money—either for a private business or for a government."

One way is to increase revenue while "freezing" or reducing costs.

For the government to increase revenue, (the tax base) requires a healthy, vibrant, growing economy and a disciplined, dedicated effort to cut expenses (as, for example, by a "forced" bankruptcy reorganization plan). This is accomplished in part by listening to people who know how to make money and not politicians who have never earned a dollar or met a payroll in the private sector.

If that is not possible due to current economic conditions on the islands, the second way is to strive to maintain the greatest possible level of government revenue while cutting government costs to the bare bone. Sound familiar?

In this regard the same tired, old litany says, "The government shouldn't be in the power generating business," "it shouldn't be in the housing business" and on and on. But nothing changes. The power is unreliable and expensive and the only thing about the water in the pipes—when there is water—is that it's wet.

One or the other of the above are basic which every successful person in private business knows.

Of course, it's easier said than done. If neither of the above can be achieved, losses must be cut and the business closed to stem the financial hemorrhage. A situation much in evidence on the islands due to the deteriorating local, national and international economy. A dire economic situation leading many government entities in the United States to consider filing for bankruptcy. The NMI is not immune from these forces.

Regarding the possibility of bankruptcy as it applies in a generic sense to a government entity, those interested should review the web site indicated below. While the information presented applies to a municipality I assume the process is generally the same for a state or other type of government entity and would not be too different from that of a municipality. For information Google http://www.uscourts.gov/bankruptcycourts/bankruptcybasics/chapter9.html.

The term "municipality" is defined in the Bankruptcy Code as a "political subdivision or public agency or instrumentality of a State." 11 U.S.C. § 101(40). The definition is broad enough to include cities, counties, townships and various public districts and probably the Commonwealth but an attorney should be consulted for clarification.

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian and military cartographer.

Chapter 9 of the Bankruptcy Code provides a financially-distressed public entity such as a government protection from its creditors while it develops and negotiates a plan for adjusting its debts under chapter 9. 11 U.S.C. § 109 (c).

I just fail to see why the retiree participants in the benefit plan should be penalized with the possible reduction of their retirement benefits, or indeed, lose their pensions entirely in a few years as a result of neglect, poor financial management and indifference on the part of the NMI's central government, which has continued for many years culminating in the current mess that was created by the government in the first place.

The central government entered into a contract with those government employees who elected to invest their own money and thereby participate—at the invitation of the government—in a government sponsored defined benefit retirement plan. Those are the facts.

For the most part the vast majority of the employees who participated in the retirement program over a period of many years had no influence over the benefits offered by the government. The benefits were conceived entirely by the government—even to the extent of opting out of an opportunity to participate in the U.S. Social Security system as an alternative for the retirees. Those are facts.

There is another important issue here just below the surface.

In the broadest meaning of the concept, if the "sanctity of contract" is to be respected by the NMI government, then the issue of honesty becomes vital to all who will do business with the government from now and in the future. The question must be posed: Can the government be trusted to honor its contractual agreements? This will be of profound importance for future foreign investors, vendors, and many others the government will need as the future unfolds. And that's a fact.

Could we engineer a cooler planet?

After years of deadlock over climate policy, Congress appears poised to enact the first federal limits on greenhouse gas emissions this fall. Yet a growing number of climate scientists and scholars believe that such efforts are likely to be too little, too late to stop warming—and that, consequently, a broader view of our climate policy options is needed.

On Monday, the National Academy of Sciences will convene a workshop to explore the question of "geoengineering" the climate—that is, influencing the global environment in ways that would restore balance to the global energy system and cool the planet until emissions reductions take effect.

Why even consider such an extreme and potentially dangerous response to climate change, just when emissions limits are likely to be enacted? Such an idea may seem outlandish at first blush, but it deserves serious study.

Despite the progress we may see in the coming years, the mathematics and politics of rapid greenhouse gas reductions remain remarkably daunting. China's emissions exploded in the past decade; if left unchecked, they alone will equal the current global level by 2030. Worldwide energy consumption is expected to increase 50 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, with the bulk of the growth coming in the developing world.

Many climate scientists believe that a significant degree of warming is already "locked in" by past emissions and that greenhouse gas concentrations have already reached potentially dangerous levels. To avoid warming, therefore, global emissions would have to be halted immediately—and existing emissions would have to be removed from the atmosphere as well. Not a likely prospect.

Even if the international climate treaty due to be negotiated in Copenhagen in December is vastly more stringent and effective than the Kyoto Protocol, it will take decades to eliminate net global emissions. Warming seems inevitable; the only questions are its timing, distribution and severity. The effects may prove to be modest—but they could be severe or perhaps catastrophic.

Even strong advocates of limiting emissions have concluded that global emissions controls are likely to take effect too slowly and too unevenly to avoid substantial risk of severe damage—and that it would be prudent to pursue research on geoengineering. White House science adviser John Holdren recently explained that "we have to look at the possibilities and understand them—including their shortcomings—because if other approaches to mitigation fall short, the geoengineering approach will end up being considered."

Could we really cool the planet? Although the science is nascent, evidence suggests that we could.

The Earth is warmed by two forces: solar radiation, which enters the atmosphere, and the greenhouse gases that trap it there. If greenhouse gases rise to dangerous levels, it might be possible to stabilize the climate by reducing the amount of solar radiation that reaches the Earth's surface or reflecting more of it back into space, restoring balance to the global energy system. The science is in its infancy, but there is intriguing preliminary evidence that it could be done—quickly, effectively and affordably, three attributes no other climate policy can claim.

The most promising ideas take their proof of concept from nature. Scientists noted that the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines cooled the planet for two to three years by roughly half a degree Celsius. There are ways of artificially reproducing this effect. For instance, ultra-fine sulfur particles injected into the upper atmosphere could deflect 1 or 2 percent of incoming sunlight—almost unnoticeable but enough to cancel out the warming expected to occur this century. This would not halt the slow acidification of the oceans caused by elevated levels of carbon dioxide, but it could cool the planet and drastically reduce the heat-related damages we would otherwise experience, buying time for emissions reductions to take effect.

There are other potentially effective geoengineering techniques that deserve serious study. For instance, low-altitude marine stratocumuli clouds, which cover about 25 percent of the world's oceans, also reflect sunlight. Research suggests that it might be possible to increase the reflective abilities of these clouds by spraying a fine mist of seawater into the air. A fleet of roughly 1,500 ships (estimated cost: $2 million per ship) might be able to increase the reflectivity of these clouds by 10 percent, enough to counteract anticipated warming.

By SAMUEL THERNSTROM
Special to The Washington Post

The writer is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where he co-directs a project exploring the policy implications of geoengineering.

There is considerable scientific evidence to support the key concepts—but no federal resources to support research. The National Academy of Sciences, NASA and the Energy Department have all concluded that geoengineering could be (as the National Academy put it) "feasible, economical and capable." All three recommended further study. The Bush administration declined to pursue a five-year, $64 million geoengineering research program that its Energy Department proposed. The Obama administration should revisit that decision.

A geoengineering system would of course be controversial, but the policy question we face today is simple: Should the federal government conduct research on geoengineering? The scientific and engineering challenges involved in geoengineering the global climate for decades, and the potential consequences of success or failure, are extraordinary; all the more reason to begin a research program commensurate with the scale and significance of the task.

Geoengineering is not a substitute for mitigation, and it raises potentially serious environmental and ethical issues. It could, however, protect us from the worst effects of warming for the many decades it will take for emissions reductions to become effective. We may ultimately decide that geoengineering's risks are too great—but undertaking a research program now would give future policymakers the opportunity to make decisions about geoengineering from a position of knowledge rather than ignorance and desperation.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲88° ▼79°	▲88° ▼79°	▲88° ▼79°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲86	▼76
Palau	Showers	▲86	▼77
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼76
Chuuk	Rain	▲88	▼78
Pohnpei	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼74
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼78
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲53	▼46
Beijing	Thunderstorms	▲73	▼63
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	▲82	▼79
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲83	▼75
London	Cloudy	▲75	▼55
Los Angeles	Thunderstorms	▲74	▼61
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼78
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲60	▼45
Miami	Thundershowers	▲89	▼78
New York	Partly Sunny	▲72	▼57
Osaka	Thundershowers	▲76	▼63
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲75	▼57
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲79	▼63
Rome	Sunny	▲87	▼61
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲76	▼53
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲70	▼56
Seoul	Cloudy	▲77	▼61
Tokyo	Showers	▲73	▼63
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲76	▼60

Yesterday's Satellite Image

PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A monsoon trough runs southeastward from 11N130E to 9N136E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found near Koror between 6N and 11N west of 134E. Scattered showers are found south of Guam between 8N and 11N from 143E to 148E. A surface trough extends southeastward from 6N143E to EQ160E. Low-level convergence near this boundary is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Chuuk within 100 miles of a line from 3N149E to 5N152E to 4N157E and within 50 miles of line from EQ158E to 2N156E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers southwest of Kosrae within 100 miles of a line from EQ162E to 2N162E to 4N161E. An upper-level trough is enhancing scattered showers well east of the Marianas within 50 miles of a line from 13N153E to 15N157E to 16N161E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
1:32 AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
8:18 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
1:23 PM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
7:23 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:47 AM	6:48 PM
Wednesday	5:47 AM	6:49 PM
Thursday	5:47 AM	6:49 PM
Friday	5:47 AM	6:49 PM
Saturday	5:48 AM	6:49 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:01 AM	12:24 PM
Wednesday	12:37 AM	1:14 PM
Thursday	1:16 AM	2:18 PM
Friday	1:58 AM	3:05 PM
Saturday	2:47 AM	4:08 PM

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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 9, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7

SAIPAN-GUAM

CO9317	4:30am	5:20am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1, 7
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	4, 5
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

CO9598	2:20am	2:50am	5, 6
CO9312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-PALAU (ROR)

CO893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3, 5
CO953	6:50pm	7:50pm	1, 7
CO953	7:35pm	10:05pm	2, 4, 6

PALAU (ROR)-MANILA

CO893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3, 5

GUAM-MANILA

CO893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3, 5 via ROR
CO933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR111	6:00am	7:45am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW99	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW78	9:00am	2:05pm	Daily via NGO
NW75	3:50pm	6:25am	Daily

GUAM-NARITA (NRT)

CO961	6:35am	9:10am	Daily
NW83	8:00am	1:55pm	Daily via KIX
CO6	12:00pm	2:45pm	Daily
NW73	4:05pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO963	4:35pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)

OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	1
OZ119	4:20am	7:00am	4,6

GUAM-OSAKA (KIX)

NW83	8:00am	10:45am	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW78	9:00am	11:40am	Daily

GUAM-NAGOYA (NGO)

CO971	7:45am	10:30am	Daily
NW23	4:10pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO975	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:50am	6:30am	excl 1
OZ119	4:00am	11:20am	1 via KIX
OZ119	4:20am	11:20am	4, 6 via KIX

SEOUL (ICN)-HONG KONG

OZ721	9:05am	11:45am	Daily
OZ723	7:45pm	10:30pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-MANILA

OZ701	8:35am	11:25am	Daily
OZ703	7:50pm	10:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

CO9598	3:25am	4:00am	5, 6
CO9312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

CO9316	2:20am	3:10am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
CO9598	2:20am	4:00am	5, 6 via ROP
CO9596	7:00am	5:00am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily x6
CO9312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	1, 4, 5, 7
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

CO9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1, 7

PALAU (ROR)-GUAM

CO954	1:10am	5:30am	3, 5, 7
CO954	1:45am	4:40am	1, 2
CO892	2:35am	5:30am	4, 6

MANILA-PALAU (ROR)

CO892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3, 5

MANILA-GUAM

CO892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3, 5 via ROR
CO934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR110	10:00pm	4:00am	1, 3, 5, 6, 7

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW76	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
NW77	6:30pm	1:40am+1	Daily via NGO
NW100	7:50pm	12:30am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-GUAM

NW74	10:00am	2:50pm	Daily
CO962	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
CO7	3:50pm	8:25pm	Daily
NW84	6:20pm	1:40am+1	Daily
CO964	8:25pm	1:00am+1	Daily
NW82	8:30pm	1:05am+1	4
NW82	8:30pm	1:20am+1	X 4

OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN

OZ120	9:55pm	2:20am+1	3, 5, 6

OSAKA (KIX)-GUAM

NW84	9:05pm	1:40am+1	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW77	9:10pm	1:40am	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-GUAM

NW24	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
CO970	11:30am	4:30pm	Daily
CO972	8:25pm	12:55am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3, 5, 6 via KIX
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:40am+1	excl 7

HONG KONG-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ724	12:30am	5:05am	Daily
OZ722	1:15pm	5:45pm	Daily

MANILA-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ702	12:45pm	5:45pm	Daily
OZ704	11:50pm	4:40am+1	Daily

SHANGHAI-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

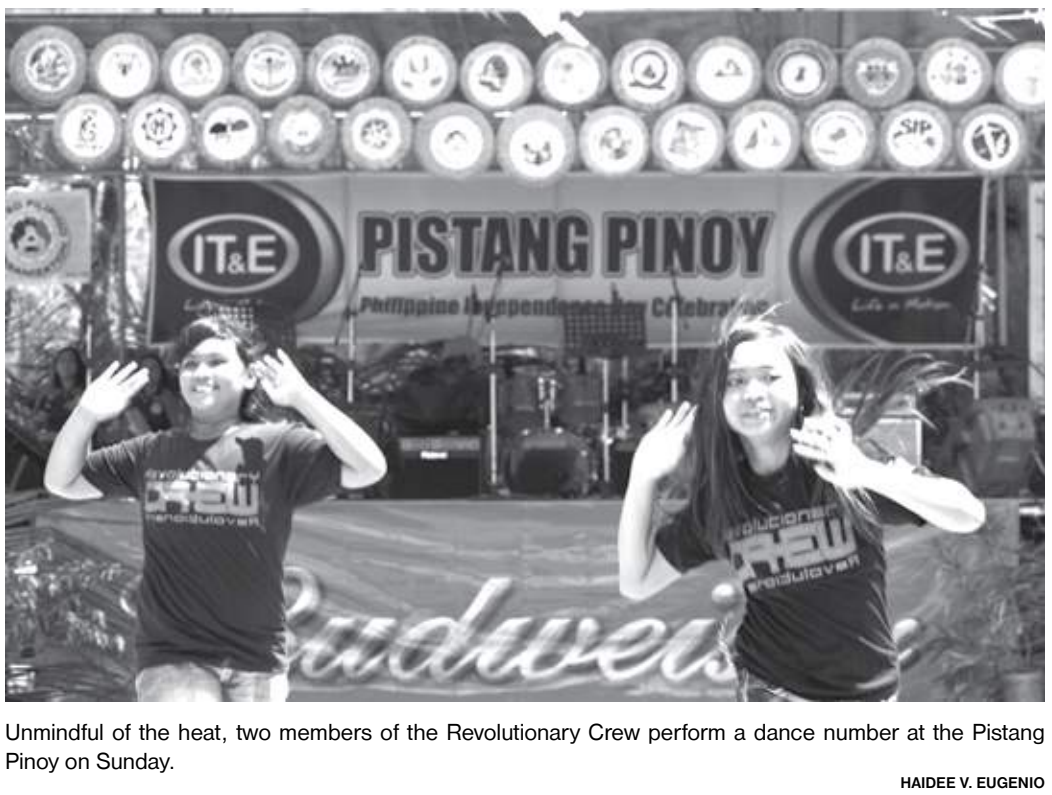
Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Annual Pistang Pinoy

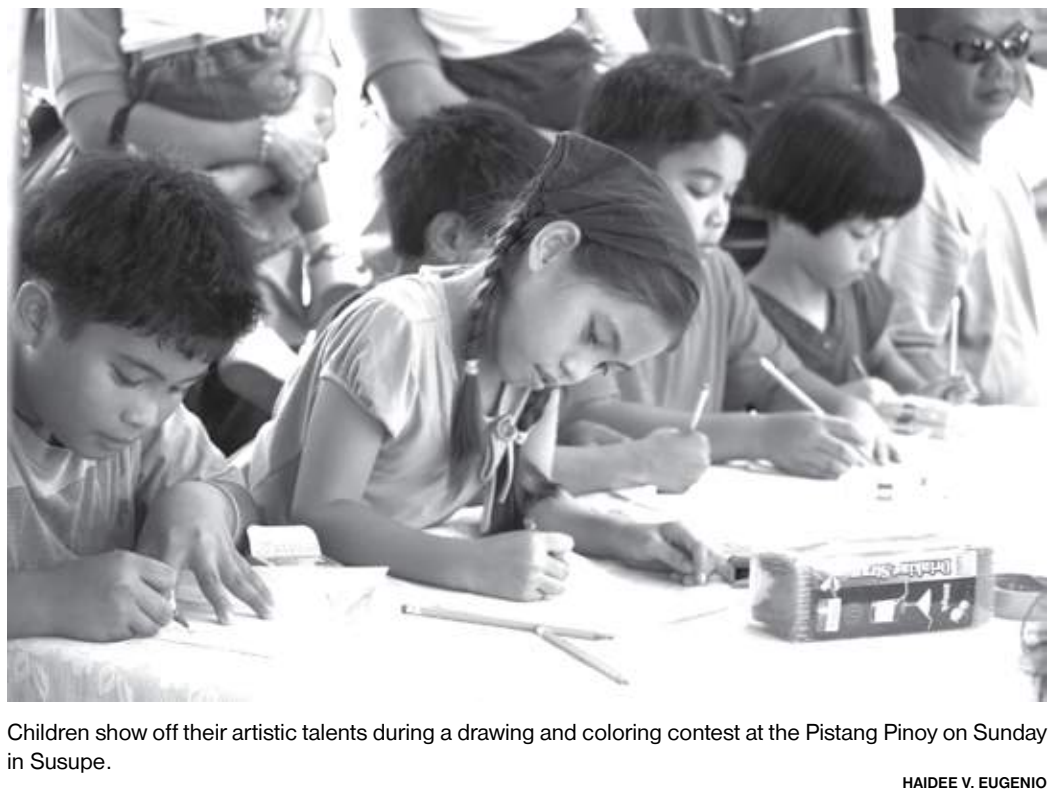
Members of the Revolutionary Crew perform a song number at the Pistang Pinoy (Filipino Festival) at Civic Center in Susupe on Sunday, as part of the 111th anniversary celebration of Philippine Independence. The Philippines declared independence from colonial rule on June 12, 1898.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A boy, left, prepares to spin a wheel to win a prize at the Western Union booth at the Pistang Pinoy in Susupe on Sunday.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

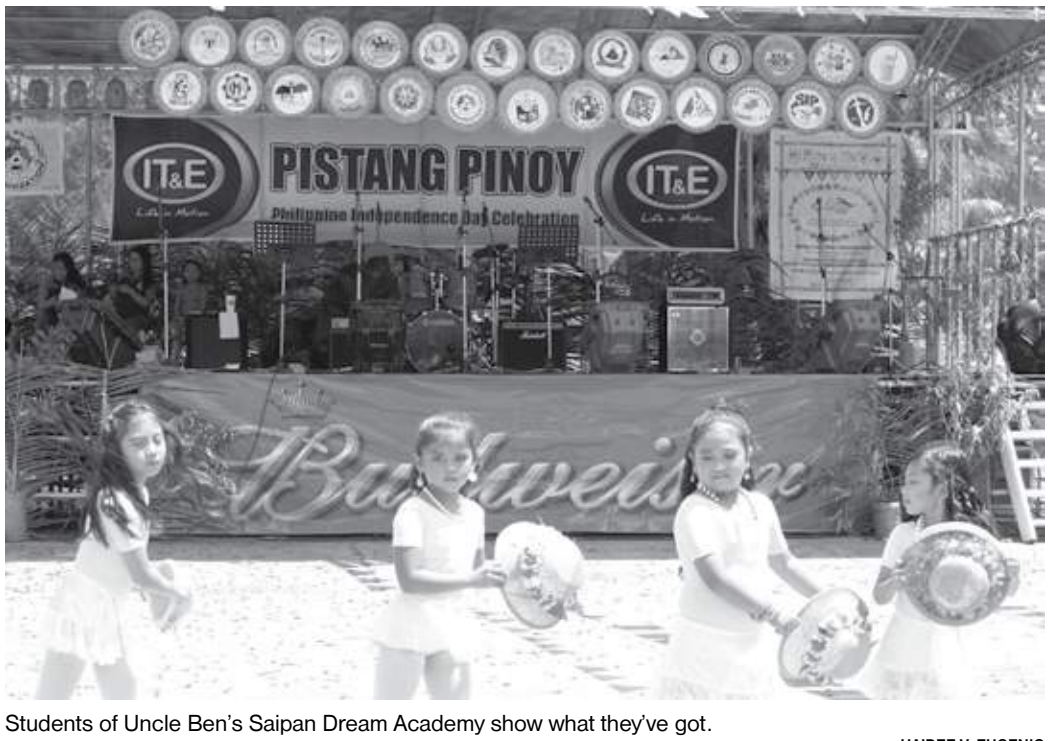
A member of Uncle Ben's Saipan Dream Academy grooves to the music at the Pistang Pinoy.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Unmindful of the heat, two members of the Revolutionary Crew perform a dance number at the Pistang Pinoy on Sunday.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Children show off their artistic talents during a drawing and coloring contest at the Pistang Pinoy on Sunday in Susupe.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



Students of Uncle Ben's Saipan Dream Academy show what they've got.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

A boy shows off his dance moves while other performers look on as part of the 30-minute song and dance performance by Uncle Ben's Saipan Dream Academy students.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Business

Obama eyes tighter controls on banks, Wall Street

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama is ready to roll out an overhaul of the intricate rules and systems that govern America's troubled financial institutions, proposing the most ambitious revision since the Great Depression.

The goal is to prevent a recurrence of the economic crisis that erupted in the United States and exploded last fall with devastating consequences still reverberating around the world.

Unlike the government's temporary ownership stake in automakers and major financial companies, the regulatory changes set to be announced Wednesday are designed to be permanent. They could result in a major realignment of power and authority among government agencies that set the rules for banking, lending and investing and touch American lives through daily transactions, from credit cards to mortgages and mutual funds.

AP

In this June 3, 2009 file photo, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday before the House Budget Committee.

The proposals already are the source of a spirited debate in Congress over whether Obama's measures will prove too timid or place too heavy a hand on the levers of capitalism.

At issue is a 21st century system of high-stakes swaps and trades, bets and losses where trillions of dollars worth of investment products have grown too intricate for a 20th century regulatory structure.

Imagine today's financial transactions as an athletic contest where the referees have lost their vantage point. Plays occur out of their sight and fouls go undetected. Some referees halt play while others let it go on.

Even the players have had enough.

"On a macro-basis, we're very supportive of reform," said Tim Ryan, president and chief executive of the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association.

In devising new regulations and oversight, the administration is looking to address four perceived weaknesses in the current system:

■ The lack of an all-seeing federal entity to detect institutional stresses that threaten the financial system, and the government's inability to step in and unwind large institutions before they choke the system. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. can do this with banks. But the government lacked the power to do the same with a behemoth such as the insurer American International Group Inc.

■ The undercapitalization of large financial institutions. Heading into the financial crisis, too many banks were leveraged with significantly more debt than equity. "If you give people enough leverage, they can lose an unbelievably large amount of their own money and that of their clients," Obama's chief economic adviser, Lawrence Summers, said last week.

■ The emergence of large, lightly regulated markets, such as hedge funds, and of big insurers, such as AIG, without a federal overseer. The administration wants large private investment funds to register with the Securities and Exchange Commission and is weighing the creation of a federal charter for insurance firms.

National Summit arrives amid economic trouble

DETROIT (AP)—The country's economic troubles already were brewing when organizers announced in September that business and other leaders would gather here to craft a plan for keeping the U.S. competitive in manufacturing, energy, technology and environmental efforts.

But few predicted the plunge to follow: Banks failed, stocks tanked, homes foreclosed and two once-mighty U.S. automakers landed in bankruptcy court. Congress has poured billions into hopeful fixes, and the new president has made it a personal mission to right the nation's ship.

So, where does that leave the three-day National Summit, which starts Monday and brings more than 90 leaders from the public and private sectors to the especially hard-hit Motor City? The answer: scaled back but no less determined to do something.

"The need is more crucial now," said Tom Dekar, a vice chairman of accounting and consulting firm Deloitte LLP, which helped create the conference.

"I think we may be where we are because we did not have the right policy set in each of those topic areas," he said. "Had we had a better set of policies in the industrial sector, had we looked at automotive market as a market ... we might not be where we are today."

Papa John's resists following rivals into pasta

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Papa John's is betting the store on keeping its eye on the pie—even as two larger competitors load their plates with pasta or sandwiches to boost sales in the slumping economy.

John Schnatter, founder and chief executive of Papa John's International Inc., is taking a pass on the type of menu expansions rolled out by rivals Pizza Hut and Domino's Pizza Inc. in the past year.

The No. 1 and 2 chains have rolled out pastas and sandwiches as they fight for sales in a pizza business that isn't doing as well as fast-food rivals in the recession.

The third-largest chain, Louisville-based Papa John's, tested its own pasta and calzones, but decided against offering them nationwide.

"We didn't see any reason to do it. And we saw several reasons not to do it," Schnatter said in a recent interview in his office at Papa John's headquarters. "It complicates operations. It makes Friday rush hour that much tougher to do." Schnatter worries that can affect the quality of the pizza.

Pizza is the centerpiece of the menu, but the chain offers an array of side items—from chicken strips and wings to breadsticks, which "enhance the core product" but don't take away from making the pizzas, he said.

Meanwhile, its rivals are seeking sales in pasta, sandwiches and other items in hopes of snaring customers looking for more choices.

For Domino's, the decision came down to trying to add sales in the sluggish pizza business.

AP

In this Sept. 23, 2005 file photo Rich Butler, general manager of a downtown Louisville, Ky., Papa John's restaurant, puts toppings on a deep-dish pizza.

EADS CEO sees A400M first flight at year-end

PARIS (AP)—EADS CEO Louis Gallois said he hopes the fate of Europe's troubled A400M military transport plane will be resolved by the end of 2009, ending months of agonizing and costly uncertainty.

In comments held for release until Sunday, Gallois said he expects the first A400M flight around the end of the year, when governments could decide whether or not to continue with the program.

The A400M transporter program was launched in 2003 with an order for 180 planes from seven governments—Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain and Turkey.

The hulking, gray aircraft with a black nose and four black propellers with curved blades is designed to replace Lockheed Martin Corp.'s aging C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft used by the U.S. Air Force as well as the retired C-160 Transall transport aircraft developed by a French and German consortium.

But EADS missed a March 31 contractual deadline for the first flight, and it could have to repay as much as euro5.7 billion ($8 billion) to governments if the project were canceled.

Planemaker Airbus, which has taken over the program from another EADS unit, is negotiating new technical requirements and commercial terms with the seven European NATO countries that first ordered the much-delayed airlifter, which has already cost EADS euro2.3 billion ($3.2 billion) in penalties and other charges.

After France and Germany said they want to prolong negotiations for six months this week, EADS hopes other defense ministers from the other countries involved in the project will make a formal decision this month to keep talking until the end of the year, Gallois said.

"The end of the negotiations could coincide with the first flight," he told journalists in Paris. "It would be more than a symbol."

Gallois said Airbus and its engine suppliers are gearing up for a first flight "around the end of the year, just before or just after."

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil falls below $72 as US dollar strengthens

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices fell below $72 a barrel Monday in Asia as a three-month rally lost steam amid a strengthening dollar. Benchmark crude for July delivery fell 68 cents to $71.36 a barrel by midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. On Friday, it fell 64 cents to settle at $72.04. Oil prices have more than doubled since March in part on expectations that massive U.S. fiscal and monetary stimulus will hasten a decline of the dollar. Investors often buy crude and other commodities as a hedge against the possibility of inflation.

Without signs of economic growth, stocks to drift

NEW YORK (AP)—The summer slowdown is setting in on Wall Street. The stock market has been drifting, stalling a three-month rally, and analysts say investors need to see more concrete signs of economic growth before they'll take stocks higher. At the same time, concerns are growing over climbing interest rates, a falling dollar and rising commodity prices—all factors that could inhibit recoveries for the market and the economy. But with trading entering a traditionally slow period, stocks' moves will likely be more sedate this week, especially in the absence of any economic reports. Analysts say that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Plenty reasons to be gloomy at Paris Air Show

LE BOURGET, France (AP)—The Paris Air Show opens Monday under a morose, uneasy cloud. Already reeling from the global recession, the aviation industry gathering in the city where Air France Flight 447 should have landed only two weeks ago has been shaken by the still unexplained crash. Pilots of the doomed Airbus A330 en route from Brazil to Paris did not even have time to make a mayday call before their plane plunged into the sea, killing all 228 people aboard. "The aviation community is still under some shock with the severity of this accident," said Airbus CEO Tom Enders on Saturday.

Nation

Co-op compromise gives White House a health option

AP
In this photograph from video provided by CNN, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius appears on CNN's "State of the Union" in Washington, Sunday, June 14, 2009.

WASHINGTON (AP)—With Republicans fighting the idea of a government-run health insurance plan, members of President Barack Obama's team said Sunday that they are open to a compromise: a cooperative program that would expand coverage with taxpayer money but without direct governmental control.

Congress begins work this week on putting Obama's goal of universal health coverage into law. Some lawmakers are expected to introduce specific plans that run counter to Obama's political promises.

The concessions could be the smoothest way to deliver the bipartisan health care legislation the administration seeks by its self-imposed August deadline, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said.

"There is no one-size-fits-all idea," she said. "The president has said, 'These are the kinds of goals I'm after: lowering costs, covering all Americans, higher-quality care.' And around those goals, there are lots of ways to get there."

Obama is addressing the American Medical Association's annual meeting in Chicago on Monday.

A senior administration official said Obama will tell the doctors that overhaul cannot wait and that bringing down health-care costs is the most important thing he can do to ensure the country's long-term fiscal health. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the president's remarks before they were delivered.

While supporters from Obama's left have advocated a government-run insurance option—championed by an ailing Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., and his surrogate, Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn.—presidential aides and congressional leaders in both parties have sought a speedy compromise.

Leading that pack: the cooperative approach, similar to rural utilities that have government financial support but operate independently. Sen. Kent Conrad, the North Dakota Democrat who chairs the Budget Committee, has offered the co-op idea as a way to avoid a bruising and protracted political wrangle on Capitol Hill.

"This really isn't, to me, a matter of right or wrong," Conrad said. "This is a matter of: Where are the votes in the United States Senate?"

That political situation has guided most of the talks. While Democrats control both chambers of Congress, they have only 59 senators—one short of the number needed to end a Republican filibuster. Even if Al Franken were seated as Minnesota's second senator, Kennedy and Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W. Va., are suffering health problems that could preclude them from casting votes to end the procedural delay.

"I think you are in a 60-vote environment. And that means you have got to attract some Republicans, as well as holding virtually all the Democrats together," Conrad said. "And that, I don't believe, is possible with the pure public option. I don't think the votes are there."

Future of feminism an issue in NOW leadership vote

NEW YORK (AP)—After years on the defensive during the Bush administration, the National Organization for Women is elated to have a president sharing many of its goals. Yet NOW heads into its own leadership contest—a sharp contrast of age and race—mindful of the need to energize its ranks.

Kim Gandy, a savvy former prosecutor, is stepping down as NOW president after eight years leading the battle against many Bush-era policies.

The election to succeed her, set for NOW's three-day national conference starting Friday in Indianapolis, is both an unusual clash of generations and an opportunity for activists to confront some of the challenges facing the feminist movement.

Delegates will be choosing between Latifa Lyles, a 33-year-old African-American who has been one of Gandy's three vice presidents, and Terry O'Neill, 56, a white activist who taught law at Tulane University, who was NOW's vice president for membership from 2001-05, and who most recently has been chief of staff for a county council member in Maryland's Montgomery County.

The two have waged a polite campaign but are aware of the contrasts. Lyles would be NOW's youngest president ever; O'Neill one of the oldest at the start of a term.

Gandy speaks respectfully of O'Neill, but she has enthusiastically endorsed Lyles.

Son of alleged museum shooter expresses remorse

WASHINGTON (AP)—The son of James von Brunn said Sunday that his father, who is accused of killing a security guard at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, had long burdened his family with his white supremacist views and that he wishes his father would have died in the shooting instead. Von Brunn, 88, has been charged with first-degree murder in the death of 39-year-old Stephen T. Johns, who was black. "I cannot express enough how deeply sorry I am it was Mr. Johns, and not my father who lost (his) life," Erik von Brunn, 32, said in a statement to ABC News. "It was unjustified and unfair that he died, and while my condolences could never begin to offer appeasement, they, along with my remorse is all I have to give."

Authorities say von Brunn shot the security guard in the chest with a vintage rifle after Johns opened the door for him. Von Brunn was shot in the face by guards and is expected to survive. A hearing is set for Monday in a D.C. federal court for a magistrate judge to hear about von Brunn's health.

von Brunn

"His views consumed him, and in doing so, not only destroyed his life, but destroyed our family and ruined our lives as well," Erik von Brunn's statement said.

The younger von Brunn told The Washington Post in a telephone interview from his mother's home in Homosassa, Fla., that he had a decent relationship with his father. The elder von Brunn never insisted that his son share his views, although he was disappointed when he did not.

Erik von Brunn, an aspiring teacher and fiction writer who recently graduated from the University of Maryland, declined to say whether he was estranged from his father. Court documents indicate that the elder von Brunn had been living with his son in a condominium in Annapolis, Md.

He said he never imagined that his father would take a life.

"I never had any inclination to think that. The man is 88 years old. I never would have thought he could do this," he said. "It really hasn't sunk in yet. It's a shock."

Hearing to air VA mistakes with hospital equipment

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP)—A congressional panel is pressing the Department of Veterans Affairs to disclose on Tuesday whether non-sterile equipment that may have exposed 10,000 veterans to HIV and other infections was isolated to three Southeast hospitals or is part of a wider problem.

"Somebody is going to have to take responsibility," said U.S. Rep. Phil Roe of Tennessee, the ranking Republican on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs' oversight and investigation subcommittee.

The subcommittee scheduled Tuesday's hearing in Washington to discuss mistakes involving endoscopic equipment used for colonoscopies and other procedures at its hospitals in Miami, Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Augusta, Ga. with top agency officials and to receive a yet-unreleased report by the VA's inspector general.

Roe said he had not yet seen the report but was told in a briefing Friday that the VA's inspector general conducted a random check on 42 VA locations.

VA officials have said problems discovered at more than a dozen other VA facilities did

not warrant follow-up blood tests for patients. Roe, who is a private physician, has questions about whether the problems were isolated to three hospitals or were more widespread.

"I think this was an institutional breakdown," Roe said.

The VA since February has been warning about 10,000 former patients, some who had colonoscopies as long ago as 2003, to get blood tests for HIV and hepatitis.

The VA's chief patient safety officer, Dr. Jim Bagian, has said no one will ever know if the patients with HIV and hepatitis were infected because of improperly operated or cleaned endoscopic equipment used in colonoscopies at Murfreesboro and Miami—and to treat patients at the VA's ear, nose and throat clinic in Augusta. Bagian has also said all the mistakes were human error.

As of Friday, the VA reported that six veterans taking the follow-up blood checks tested positive for HIV, 34 tested positive for hepatitis C and 13 tested positive for hepatitis B. All but 724 affected patients have been notified of test results.

ACROSS THE NATION

18-year old charged in Florida cat mutilations

MIAMI (AP)—A teenager faces charges in a gruesome string of cat mutilations and killings that have horrified his neighbors and shaken animal lovers in two South Florida communities. Tyler Hayes Weinman, 18, was charged Sunday with 19 counts each of animal cruelty and improperly disposing of an animal body and four counts of burglary related to the deaths. In the past month, residents in the Palmetto Bay and Cutler Bay neighborhoods have reported finding the bodies of more than two dozen cats. Police said some were likely killed by dogs. Some were missing fur—neighbors said some had been skinned—and appeared to have been cut with a sharp, straight instrument, police said.

CIA head says Cheney almost wishing US be attacked

WASHINGTON (AP)—CIA Director Leon Panetta says former Vice President Dick Cheney's criticism of the Obama administration's approach to terrorism almost suggests "he's wishing that this country would be attacked again, in order to make his point." Panetta told The New Yorker for an article in its June 22 issue that Cheney "smells some blood in the water" on the issue of national security. Cheney has said in several interviews that he thinks Obama is making the U.S. less safe. He has been critical of Obama for ordering the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, halting enhanced interrogations of suspected terrorists and reversing other Bush administration initiatives he says helped to prevent attacks on the U.S.

Fiery Calif. freeway crash kills trucker

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP)—A tanker truck hauling 8,000 gallons of ethanol crashed and exploded into an inferno that sent a river of fire into storm drains, killed the driver and blocked major highways. Witnesses said the heat from the blazing ethanol, or ethyl alcohol, was so intense it melted guardrails, and all that remained of the truck were its axles and small portions of the cab. The truck crashed around 6 p.m. Saturday, hitting the side rail of eastbound State Route 91 at the transition to Interstate 710, the Long Beach Fire Department said in a statement. The cause of the crash was under investigation.

Sick sea critters aided by Marine Mammal Center

FORT CRONKHITE, Calif. (AP)—A recent surge in weakened and malnourished sea lions found along the Northern California coast is mystifying scientists and keeping workers hopping at the newly expanded Marine Mammal Center here. "We're way ahead in the numbers this year. We have twice as many animals as we should," marine veterinarian Bill Van Bonn said after examining Charcoal, a sick harbor seal. Experts at the non-profit center, located on windswept Marin headlands just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, believe the perplexing spike in malnourished sea lions along several hundred miles of coast could be due to a decline in populations of smaller fish that young seals and sea lions eat while developing.

Asia

Pakistan orders hunt vs Taliban chief

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Pakistan ordered its army to go after the country's top Taliban commander, a feared al-Qaida-allied militant whose remote stronghold could prove a difficult test for troops but whose demise would remove a major threat to the country's stability.

The announcement Sunday of the operation in South Waziristan, rumored for weeks, came hours after a suspected U.S. missile strike killed five alleged militants there. The move will likely please Washington, which wants Pakistan to eliminate safe havens for militants leaving Afghanistan and which considers South Waziristan a particularly troublesome hideout for al-Qaida.

Owais Ghani, the governor of North West Frontier Province, told reporters in Islamabad late Sunday that the government felt it had no choice but to resort to force against Pakistani Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud and his network. Past army action in the region had usually faltered or ended in truces, strengthening the militants.

"Baitullah Mehsud is the root cause of all evils," Ghani said, noting a slew of suicide bombings that have shaken Pakistan in recent days. "The government has decided that to secure the innocent citizens from terrorists, a meaningful, durable and complete action is to be taken."

Ghani suggested the operation has already begun, though the military has insisted its recent attacks on militants in South Waziristan were retaliatory, not the launch of a new offensive. Two intelligence officials said the army and Taliban were fighting in the Spinkai Raghzai area of South Waziristan as the governor made the announcement.

Army spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas told The Associated Press late Sunday: "The government has made the announcement. We will give a comment after evaluating the orders."

S. Korean leader heads to US for summit with Obama

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's president said Monday that the country's alliance with the United States is key to resolving North Korea's nuclear and missile threats as he flew to Washington for a summit with President Barack Obama.

The summit scheduled for Tuesday comes in the wake of North Korea's weekend declaration that it would step up its nuclear bomb-making program. It also threatened war with any country that tries to stop its ships on the high seas as part of new U.N. Security Council sanctions passed in response to Pyongyang's May 25 nuclear test.

North Korea is believed to have enough weaponized plutonium for at least half a dozen atomic bombs, and a U.S. government official said last week Pyongyang may be preparing for another nuclear test, its third. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss the unreleased information and provided no details.

U.S. and South Korean intelligence were keeping a close eye on signs of an impending test.

"We cannot stress enough the importance of diplomacy at a time when a security crisis is intensifying due to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats," President Lee Myung-bak said in a radio speech before his departure Monday.

New US general to take over Afghanistan command

KABUL (AP)—Gen. Stanley McChrystal, a four-star American general with a long history in special operations, was to take charge of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan on Monday, a change of command the Pentagon hopes will turn the tide in the eight-year war.

McChrystal

McChrystal is scheduled to take command from Gen. David McKiernan during a low-key ceremony at the heavily fortified headquarters of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in central Kabul. McKiernan was fired last month by Defense Secretary Robert Gates halfway through his two-year assignment.

An outgoing general typically hands off command to his replacement during a ceremony, but McKiernan quietly left the country earlier this month.

McChrystal, a former commanding general of the Joint Special Operations Command, is expected to bring a more unconventional approach to a war that has turned increasingly violent in the last three years.

He will command the largest international force ever in Afghanistan. A record 56,000 U.S. troops are in the country, alongside 32,000 forces from 41 other countries.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Nepal's Maoists grow angry amid fears for peace

DASTRATPUR, Nepal (AP)—They pass their days on an old research farm now set behind a tall barbed-wire fence, a place of flimsy wooden buildings, weed-filled roads and laundry strung from the volleyball net. Or they wander through the dusty two-street town, where there's little to do but sit on benches in front of ramshackle general stores. Some walk with limps that tell of battlefield injuries, of years spent fighting in the mountains. Many still wear jungle camouflage. They are bored, frustrated and increasingly angry. And three years after war ended in Nepal, these former Maoist guerrillas are among the biggest threats to the Himalayan nation's fragile peace.

Philippine swine flu cases climb to 193

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine health officials say swine flu cases in the country have climbed to 193, including patients from a farming town north of Manila where a community-level outbreak has been declared. Health Secretary Francisco Duque III told reporters Monday that 46 more people have been infected but that all cases are mild. Of the 193 cases, 71 have fully recovered. Duque said the new cases include eight infections in a village in northern Nueva Ecija province's Jaen township, where the disease has spread in the community. Another eight appeared at an elementary school in northern Bulacan province.

Chinese sub, US sonar collision accidental: report

BEIJING (AP)—A state-run newspaper said Monday that a Chinese submarine's reported collision with an underwater sonar apparatus towed by a U.S. destroyer last week in the South China Sea was likely an accident. The official *China Daily* cited Chinese military experts as saying the submarine's collision with the sonar array connected to the USS *John S. McCain* while sailing near the Philippines probably occurred due to a misjudgment of distance. Yin Zhuo, a senior researcher with the People's Liberation Army's Navy Equipment Research Center, said the American destroyer appeared to have failed to detect the submarine, while the Chinese vessel set its distance from the McCain assuming it was not carrying sonar arrays, according to the paper.

World

Iran protesters shout from rooftops

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Protesters battled police over Iran's disputed election and shouted their opposition from the rooftops Sunday, but President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad dismissed the unrest as little more than "passions after a soccer match" and drew his own huge rally of support.

Just after sundown, cries of "death to the dictator" echoed through Tehran as thousands of backers for Ahmadinejad's rival, Mir Hossein Mousavi, heeded a call to bellow from the roofs and balconies. The deeply symbolic act recalled the shouts of "Allahu Akbar," or God is Great, to show opposition to the Western-backed monarchy before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The scenes summed up the showdown over the disputed elections: an outwardly confident Ahmadinejad exerted control, while Mousavi showed no sign of backing down and could be staking out a new role as powerful opposition voice.

AP

Supporters of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, react, as he speaks at a rally in Vali Asr square in Tehran, Iran Sunday, June 14, 2009.

His charges that Friday's vote was riddled by fraud brought sympathetic statements from Vice President Joe Biden and other leaders. Mousavi made a direct appeal with Iran's ruling clerics to annul the result, but the chances were considered remote.

With his wide network of young and middle-class backers, Mousavi could emerge as a leader for Iran's liberal ranks and bring internal pressure on Ahmadinejad and Iran's theocracy to take less confrontational policies toward the West.

But the struggle Sunday was on the streets in the worst unrest in Tehran since student-led protests 10 years ago.

Demonstrators were back on the streets with the same tactics: torching bank facades and trash bins, smashing store windows and hurling rocks at anti-riots squads in Tehran.

Police responded with baton-wielding sweeps—sometimes targeting bystanders—and the regime shut down text messaging systems and pro-reform Internet sites.

Netanyahu endorses Palestinian independence

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu endorsed a Palestinian state beside Israel for the first time on Sunday, reversing himself under U.S. pressure but attaching conditions such as having no army that the Palestinians swiftly rejected.

Netanyahu

A week after President Barack Obama's address to the Muslim world, Netanyahu said the Palestinian state would also have to recognize Israel as the Jewish state—essentially saying Palestinian refugees must give up the goal of returning to Israel.

With those conditions, he said, he could accept "a demilitarized Palestinian state alongside the Jewish state."

The West Bank-based Palestinian government dismissed the proposal.

"Netanyahu's speech closed the door to permanent status negotiations," senior Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said. "We ask the world not to be fooled by his use of the term Palestinian state because he qualified it. He declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel, said refugees would not be negotiated and that settlements would remain."

Netanyahu, in an address seen as his response to Obama, refused to heed the U.S. call for an immediate freeze of construction on lands Palestinians claim for their future state. He also said the holy city of Jerusalem must remain under Israeli sovereignty.

The White House said Obama welcomed the speech as an "important step forward."

WORLD BRIEFS

US signal locator to search for Flight 447 boxes

SAO PAULO (AP)—A Dutch ship towing a high-tech, U.S. Navy listening device was set to troll the Atlantic on Sunday in search of data and voice recorders that investigators say are key to determining what caused an Air France jet to crash in the Atlantic with 228 people on board. The Navy device, called a Towed Pinger Locator, will try to detect emergency audio beacons, or pings, from Flight 447's black boxes, which could be lying thousands of feet (meters) below the ocean surface. Without the recorders, it may be impossible to ever know what caused the Airbus A330 to crash several hundred miles off Brazil's northeastern coast on May 31.

Argentine glacier advances despite global warming

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)—Argentina's Perito Moreno glacier is one of only a few ice fields worldwide that have withstood rising global temperatures. Nourished by Andean snowmelt, the glacier constantly grows even as it spawns icebergs the size of apartment buildings into a frigid lake, maintaining a nearly perfect equilibrium since measurements began more than a century ago. "We're not sure why this happens," said Andres Rivera, a glacialist with the Center for Scientific Studies in Valdivia, Chile. "But not all glaciers respond equally to climate change."

Soldiers capture 25 gunmen in northern Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP)—The Mexican army has captured 25 gunmen in northern Mexico who witnesses say disguised themselves as soldiers. The men were captured at a ranch in the state of Chihuahua, across from Texas, after the army received a complaint, the Defense Department said in a statement Sunday. Soldiers also seized 29 automatic rifles during the Thursday raid in Nicolas Bravo. Mexico has deployed 45,000 soldiers nationwide to crush Mexico's drug cartels but corruption among police and other government officials has hindered the crackdown.

Overdrive

2009 MERCEDES-BENZ S63 AMG

A seductive machine at an opulent price

When loaded up with Grand Touring features, the 2009 Mazda6 feels like a Lexus, but not snotty.

LOS ANGELES TIMES.

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Few things are more frustrating than being stuck in traffic in a car as fine and fast as this week's subject automobile, the 2009 Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG high-performance sedan.

It's a cruel joke.

You are trapped in a car with a base price of $131,350, surrounded by substantially less-expensive metal. Neither you nor your fellow motorists are going anywhere fast.

But you are paying a bigger penalty. In city traffic, your S63 AMG averages 11 miles per gallon. Please note the word "averages." In traffic jams, you get even less. And that's in a car that requires premium unleaded gasoline. Highway mileage isn't much better at an average of 17 miles per gallon.

Anyone who can buy a car priced well in excess of $100,000 shouldn't complain about the cost of fueling it. But that isn't the point. It's the real-world infringement on automotive fantasies that upsets me. It's like being brutally awakened from a pleasant dream—over and over again, with happiness promised but seldom delivered.

The S63 AMG is one of the world's most beautiful, best-engineered automobiles—a rear-wheel-drive sedan endowed with a 6.3-liter V-8 engine that develops a maximum 518 horsepower and 465 foot-pounds of torque.

That's a lot of oomph! In this case, it's oomph accompanied by the romance of hand-built craftsmanship. That engine is lovingly, painstakingly, manually assembled—piece by piece—by skilled tradesmen at AMG, the Mercedes-Benz high-performance group.

The acronym reflects the surnames of the engineering partners who founded the group—Hans Werner Aufrecht (A) and Erhard Melcher (M)—in Aufrecht's hometown of Grossaspach (G), Germany.

AMG, now located in the German town of Affalterbach, began life as AMG Engine Production and Development in 1967 in a world much different from the one we inhabit today. There was little talk of global warming back then. Speeds on Germany's Autobahn were mostly unrestricted, even near urban centers. Automotive journalists worldwide hungered for a chance to get to Germany to drive a top car at top speed on the world's finest, fastest highway.

Those days are gone. Nowadays, the easiest way to get a pricey traffic ticket in Germany is to ignore speed limits near urban areas. Lawbreakers will be photographed, found and fined.

Now, there are tough environmental laws reflected in levies on automobiles whose tailpipes emit more carbon dioxide and other smog-causing pollutants than the law allows.

In the United States, a car such as the S63 AMG is freighted with a $3,000 federal gas-guzzler tax at new-car purchase. Also, there is a potential social cost, such as the reactive opprobrium served up by the economically frugal, the unemployed and otherwise job-threatened in a frighteningly troubled economy, and the environmentally righteous.

It all sort of takes the joy out of sitting behind the wheel of a sumptuously leathered automobile such as the S63 AMG—sort of.

The human spirit is wondrously vulnerable to seduction. There is a degree of greed and lust in all of us.

The world turns on such desire. Empires rise and fall because of it. It generates our poetry, novels, theater, music, dance and fine art. News organizations could not exist without it.

So, it is in celebration of Grand Desire, the possibility of fulfilling it on some lonely road for however brief a moment, that, despite its many real-world limitations, I toast the Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG high-performance sedan. Here's to one hell of a car!

NUTS & BOLTS

COMPLAINTS
It's thirsty as heck. Also, the Mercedes-Benz COMAND navigation and infotainment system is unnecessarily complicated to use.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING
On roads where the S63 AMG can be driven the way it was engineered to be driven, it offers superior performance (moving from zero to 60 miles per hour in 4.5 seconds, for example) in all three categories. But finding those roads is a problem.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT
It inspires fear, loathing, lust and greed. For better or worse, you will be noticed.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT
The S63 AMG is a front-engine, full-size, luxury sports sedan available with standard rear-wheel-drive (as driven for this column), or optional all-wheel-drive.

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION
It comes with a 6.3-liter, 32-valve V-8 engine that develops 518 horsepower at 6,800 revolutions a minute and 465 foot-pounds of torque at 5,200 revolutions a minute. The engine is mated to a seven-speed transmission that can be operated automatically or manually.

CAPACITIES
There are seats for five people. Maximum cargo capacity is 16 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 23.8 gallons of required premium unleaded gasoline.

MILEAGE
I averaged 12.5 miles per gallon in combined city-highway driving, much of it compromised by traffic jams.

SAFETY
If you can find a safer automobile, buy it. The S63 AMG is built like a bank-vault (reflected in its curb weight of 4,663 pounds). Standard equipment includes Mercedes-Benz's patented Predictive Occupant Protection System.

PRICING
The base price on the 2009 S63 AMG with rear-wheel drive is $131,350. Dealer's invoice price on that model is $122,156. Price as tested is $140,240, including $5,015 in options (iPod connection kit, electronic night-view assistance, electronic parking and blind-spot protection assistance), $875 destination charge and $3,000 federal gas-guzzler tax. Dealer's price as tested is $130,350. Prices are sourced from Mercedes-Benz, Edmunds.com, and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

PURSE-STRINGS NOTE
If you can afford it and you want it, buy it. It's a dream for the rest of us.

Lowborn Mazda6 sure cleans up nicely

BY DAN NEIL
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES TIMES
When loaded up with Grand Touring features, the 2009 Mazda6 feels like a Lexus, but not snotty.

The Mazda6 I Grand Touring, which starts life as a rather lowborn family sedan of indifferent parentage—a Ford/Mazda/Volvo mid-size front-drive global platform—has become astonishingly suave and sophisticated, by dint of practically every luxury option and feature in the Ford/Mazda larder.

The base model Mazda6—nicely equipped with lots of power doodads and standard stability control—is priced at $19,220. After all the optioning and box-ticking that can be done is done, however, the car becomes the I Grand Touring, a wildly overachieving and entertaining pseudo-luxury sedan with—take a breath now—proximity-sensing keyless entry and push-button start; 17-inch alloy wheels; rain-sensing windshield wipers; auto-dimming heated outside mirrors with "puddle" lights; automatic Xenon headlights and LED taillights; leather upholstery; and a blind-spot monitoring system. Add the optional moon roof/navigation/Bose audio package ($3,760 total) and $100 for California, and you've got a singularly uplifted mid-market sedan out the door for $29,440.

Think of it as a Lexus without the snotty attitude.

And I must say, there is something almost illicit in the day-to-day experience of this mega-Mazda. It's a lovely car, with a sleek, coupelike profile and superbly ordered lines that whisper to the wind even while it's parked in the driveway. Still, it's fairly modest and unassuming. Then you walk up to it and the doors unlock for you (proximity-sensing keyless entry) and the puddle lights illuminate your way; you drive it and the headlights snap on and the wipers swash away when the rain comes. The leather is soft, the dash graphics are bright.

This is luxury so stealthy it's practically ninja.

The first-generation Mazda6 (2003-2008) was a fierce little terrier of a car that was too tight for Americans' lardy hindquarters.

The new car, completely overhauled, is 6.1 inches longer, 2.1 inches wider and about 150 pounds heftier than the old 6. In other words, it's a completely different and much larger car such that you wonder if they shouldn't have called it the Mazda6.5 or even Mazda7 3/4. The trunk is enormous—16.6 cubic feet—and the cabin has more elbowroom than the neighborhood bar.

It is not the mid-size, four-door dagger that the old car was, yet on the 17-inch wheels and racy summer tires, the new car has loads of sheer mechanical grip. Here's a note from the Department of Handling: Grip is more important to a front-drive car than a rear-drive car because it tends to neutralize a front-driver's forward weight bias, so that understeer manifests itself only at higher speeds and side loads. At anything less than banzai attacks on a canyon road, the Mazda6 feels as neutral as a rear-drive car.

Turn-in is crisp and composed, body roll is nicely controlled, and the car generally feels as stuck to the pavement as the Department of Transportation's yellow paint. Yet the Mazda6 offers a pleasant, smooth and composed ride—even a touch elegant. Nice chassis tuning, Mr. Mazda.

Between the handsomely fluted front fenders is a 2.5-liter, 168-hp in-line four (the same as in the Mazda3) twisting the half-shafts with 166 pound-feet of torque and purring and chirring through alloy-trimmed dual exhaust ports integrated into the rear bodywork. A six-speed manual and a five-speed automatic are available. Our test car had the tightly notched and greasy-fast six-speeder. Initial tip-in is smooth and affirmative, and while acceleration is not mind-blowing (about 8 seconds to go from zero to 60 mph), the car feels plenty quick enough.

It even gets reasonable gas mileage—20 mpg city/29 mpg highway. That's not class-leading, but it's a dang sight better than the car gets with the optional 3.7-liter, 272-hp V6 (17/25 mpg. That's the kind of petrol abuse I'd expect from a rotary engine RX-8).

Do you buy "grand cru" wine by the box or sprinkle gold dust on your breakfast cereal? Here's the car for you. Cool, classy and about the most refined thing ever to be born in Flat Rock, Mich., the Mazda6 might be a mule in horse collar, but it's certainly a very nice mule.

Life & Style

Celebrities tweet for Suu Kyi's release in Myanmar

BANGKOK (AP)—Hollywood star Julia Roberts and detained Chinese activists are among celebrities and political prisoners tweeting and signing petitions for the release of Myanmar's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi as she approaches her 64th birthday—her 14th spent in detention—organizers said Sunday.

Suu Kyi will spend her 64th birthday Friday in Yangon's notorious Insein prison, facing charges of violating terms of her house arrest by harboring an American who swam uninvited to her lakeside home.

The ruling junta is widely expected to deliver a guilty verdict, which could put the Nobel Peace Prize laureate in prison for up to five years. She has already spent more than 13 of the last 19 years under house arrest.

"We must not stand by as she is silenced again. Now is the time for the international community to speak with one voice," Roberts wrote as part of a campaign—"64 words for Aung San Suu Kyi"—organized by a coalition of human rights and activist groups.

The campaign, launched May 27, asks Suu Kyi's supporters to tweet, write text messages or send video and photos to its Web site, http://64forsuu.org .

Similar campaigns on Suu Kyi's past birthdays and other milestones generated some global publicity for her cause but have failed to change the military junta's harsh attacks on all signs of dissent. Myanmar, also known as Burma, has been dominated by the military since 1962.

"Burma's generals think they can act with impunity. We'll have to wait until after the trial verdict to see if this time will be any different," said Mark Farmaner of Burma Campaign UK, one of the organizers.

AP

A Myanmar activist chants slogans calling for the immediate release of detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a protest outside the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, Thursday, June 11, 2009.

Actress Demi Moore, actor Kevin Spacey, artist Yoko Ono and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown were among the contributors to the Web site. James Cameron, director of "Titanic" and "The Terminator," wrote, "While my heroes are fictional, Aung San Suu Kyi is a real-life hero and she needs help from you."

In a parallel campaign, the organizers have to date gathered the signatures of 107 former or current political prisoners from over 20 countries calling for the release of political prisoners in Myanmar and calling on the U.N. Security Council to impose a global arms embargo on the Southeast Asian nation.

"The continued denial of your freedom unacceptably attacks the human rights of all 2,156 political prisoners in Myanmar. As those also incarcerated for our political beliefs, we share the world's outrage," the 64-word message said.

The signatories include Kim Dae-jung, a former South Korean president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate; Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian human rights campaigner who also won the prize; former Czech President Vaclav Havel; and two female Chinese activists currently under house arrest, Yuan Weijing and Zeng Jinyan.

"Aung San Suu Kyi's continued detention shames Asia," wrote Kim.

Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, urged the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to lift its policy of nonintervention in Myanmar, which is a member of the 10-nation bloc.

Organizers of the campaign include Human Rights Watch, the U.S. Campaign for Burma, Burma Info Japan, Open Society Institute, France's Info Birmanie and Amnesty International.

Real 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' gravely ill

LONDON (AP)—They were childhood chums. Then they drifted apart, lost touch completely, and only renewed their friendship decades later, when illness struck.

Not so unusual, really.

Except she is Lucy Vodden—the girl who was the inspiration for the Beatles' 1967 psychedelic classic "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds"—and he is Julian Lennon, the musician son of John Lennon.

They are linked together by something that happened more than 40 years ago when Julian brought home a drawing from school and told his father, "That's Lucy in the sky with diamonds."

Just the sort of cute phrase lots of 3- or 4-year-olds produce—but not many have a father like John Lennon, who used it as a springboard for a legendary song that became a centerpiece on the landmark album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

"Julian got in touch with me out of the blue, when he heard how ill I was, and he said he wanted to do something for me," said the 46-year-old Vodden, who has lupus, a chronic disease where the immune system attacks the body's own tissue.

Lennon, who lives in France, sent his old friend flowers and vouchers she could use to buy plants at a local gardening center, since working in her garden is one of the few activities she is still occasionally well enough to enjoy. More importantly, he has offered her friendship and a connection to more carefree days. They communicate mostly by text message.

"I wasn't sure at first how to approach her. I wanted at least to get a note to her," Julian Lennon told The Associated Press. "Then I heard she had a great love of gardening, and I thought I'd help with something she's passionate about, and I love gardening too. I wanted to do something to put a smile on her face."

Vodden admits she enjoys her association with the song, but doesn't particularly care for it. Perhaps that's not surprising. It was thought by many at the time, including BBC executives who banned the song, that the classic was a paean to LSD because of the initials in the title. Plus, she and Julian were 4 years old in 1967, the "Summer of Love" when "Sgt. Pepper" was released to worldwide acclaim. She missed the psychedelic era to which the song is indelibly linked.

AP

In this undated file photograph British pop band The Beatles pose for a photograph. The woman who as a child was the basis for the Beatles song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is gravely ill.

"I don't relate to the song, to that type of song," said Vodden, described as "the girl with kaleidoscope eyes" in the lyrics. "As a teenager, I made the mistake of telling a couple of friends at school that I was the Lucy in the song and they said, 'No, it's not you, my parents said it's about drugs.' And I didn't know what LSD was at the time, so I just kept it quiet, to myself."

There's no doubt the fanciful lyrics and swirling musical effects draw heavily on the LSD experiences that were shaping Lennon's artistic output at the time—although many of the musical flourishes were provided by producer George Martin, who was not a drug user.

"The imagery in the song is partly a reflection of John's drug experiences, and partly his love of `Alice in Wonderland,'" said Steve Turner, author of "A Hard Day's Write," a book that details the origins of every Beatles song. "At the time it came out, it seemed overtly psychedelic, it sounded like some kind of trip. It was completely new at the time. To me it is very evocative of the period."

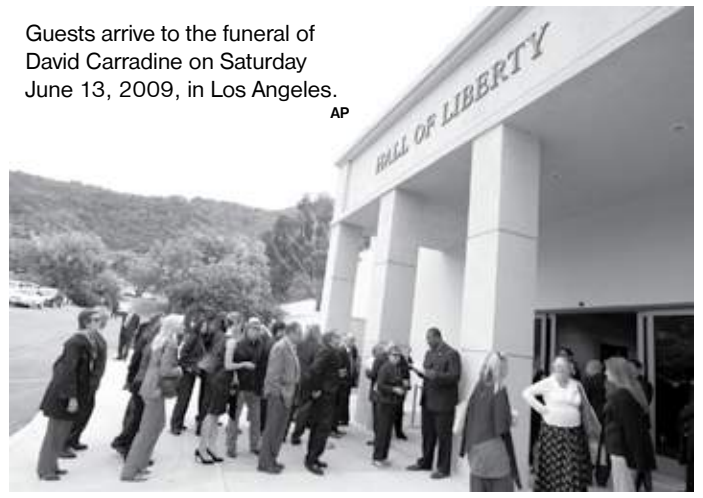
Turner said his research, including interviews with Vodden and Julian Lennon, confirm that she is the Lucy in the song. He said it was common for John Lennon to "snatch songs out of thin air" based on a simple phrase he heard on TV or an item he read in the newspapers. In this case, Turner said, it was the phrase from Julian that triggered John's imagination.

Veteran music critic Fred Schruers said Julian Lennon's reaching out to help Vodden as she fights the disease is particularly moving because of the childlike nature of the song.

"It's enormously evocative but with a tinge of poignancy," he said. "It's the lost childhood Julian had with that little Lucy and the lost innocence we had with the psychedelic era, an innocence we really cherished until it was snatched away."

Vodden was diagnosed with lupus about five years ago after suffering other serious health problems. She has been struggling extreme fatigue, joint pain, and other ailments.

"She's not given up, she's a fighter, and she has her family backing her, that's a good thing," said Angie Davidson, campaign director for St. Thomas' Lupus Trust, which funds research. "We need more people like her, more Lucys."



Guests arrive to the funeral of David Carradine on Saturday June 13, 2009, in Los Angeles.

AP

Hundreds honor David Carradine at funeral

By ANTHONY McCARTNEY
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Hundreds gathered to honor David Carradine at a sprawling hillside cemetery on Saturday during a funeral that was attended by family, former co-stars and other Hollywood friends.

The invitation-only services were held indoors at the Hall of Liberty at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills, a 400-acre cemetery laid out adjacent to Los Angeles' Griffith Park.

Mostly gloomy skies prevailed outside, with cold blasts of wind sweeping across the cemetery. The funeral lasted more than two hours and as more than 400 mourners left, clouds parted in the west offering a magnificent sunset.

Guests gathered and hugged outside the hall, where security ensured only invited guests gained entry.

They gathered more than a week after Carradine, 72, was found hanging in a Bangkok hotel room on June 4. Thai authorities continue to investigate his death. A statement released Thursday by a private pathologist said suicide had been ruled out as a cause of death.

Carradine's family stayed out of sight from a small group of reporters and cameras. His burial was private. Brothers Keith and Robert Carradine asked for privacy and understanding while the family mourned in a statement released on Thursday.

Keith Carradine briefly appeared outside before the service and greeted some people before heading back inside.

Among the hundreds of guests were numerous actors, including Michael Madsen, Jane Seymour, Tom Selleck, Frances Fisher, Daryl Hannah, Lucy Liu, Edward James Olmos, Ali Larter, and James Cromwell. Rob Schneider also attended, carrying a basket of flowers.

Madsen and Liu both starred alongside Carradine in Quentin Tarantino's two-part "Kill Bill" saga. Carradine married his fifth wife, Annie Bierman, at Madsen's home in 2004.

Carradine is perhaps best known for his role as Kwai Chang Caine on three seasons of the 1970s hit show "Kung Fu." His role in popular culture was cemented by the time he left the show after three seasons in 1975.

BEST SELLERS

Nonfiction

1 **Outliers, by Malcolm Gladwell** (Little, Brown: $27.99) An exploration of the background of high achievers.

2 **The Last Lecture**, by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow (Hyperion: $21.95) A professor's terminal cancer inspires a call to seize life's moments.

3 **Liberty and Tyranny**, by Mark R. Levin (Threshold Editions: $25) The talk-radio personality's call to revitalize the conservative vision in America.

4 **Act Like a Lady**, Think Like a Man, by Steve Harvey (Amistad: $23.99) The talk-show host lets women inside the mind-set of a man.

5 **Horse Soldiers**, by Doug Stanton (Scribner: $28) The true story of a small unit of Special Forces soldiers who pursued the Taliban in Afghanistan after 9/11.

6 **This Is Water**, by David Foster Wallace (Little, Brown: $14.99) Thoughts and advice from a 2005 commencement speech at Kenyon College.

7 **Losing Mum and Pup**, by Christopher Buckley (Twelve: $24.99) The son of William F. and Patricia Buckley tells of life with the high-powered couple and how he coped with their deaths.

8 **Resilience**, by Elizabeth Edwards (Broadway: $22.95) The wife of former presidential candidate John Edwards reflects on facing life's adversities.

9 **The Secret**, by Rhonda Byrne (Beyond Words: $23.95) Life's secrets, distilled.

10 **Mirrors**, by Eduardo Galeano (Nation Books: $26.95) A history of the world told through tales of lesser-known artists, writers and visionaries.

Fiction

1 **Scarecrow**, by Michael Connelly (Little, Brown: $27.99) A recently downsized reporter investigates a serial killer who uses his computer job to find his victims.

2 **Shanghai Girls**, by Lisa See (Random House: $25) Two sisters from Shanghai encounter tragedy and heartbreak as they are sold into arranged marriages in 1930s Los Angeles.

3 **Gone Tomorrow**, by Lee Child (Delacorte: $27) The capture of a suspected suicide bomber on a New York subway causes a chain of global events.

4 **Eclipse**, by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown: $19.99) Bella must choose between her lover and a friend, between life and death.

5 **The Last Olympian**, by Rick Riordan (Disney Hyperion: $17.99) Percy Jackson and his army of demigods battle to stop the Lord of Time.

6 **Pygmy**, by Chuck Palahniuk (Doubleday: $24.95) Terrorists disguised as foreign-exchange students plot mass destruction.

7 **Breaking Dawn**, by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown: $22.99) The final book in the Twilight saga finds Bella choosing immortality.

8 **Sunnyside**, by Glen David Gold (Knopf: $26.95) Tales of a young soldier, Charlie Chaplin and an aspiring actor portray life in early 20th-century America.

9 **Diary of a Wimpy Kid**: The Last Straw, by Jeff Kinney (Amulet: $12.95) Greg's dad enlists him in sports to toughen him up.

10 **The Women**, by T.C. Boyle (Viking: $27.95) Frank Lloyd Wright's life as told by four women who loved him.

(c) 2009 Los Angeles Times

Blago guest stars in 'Rod Blagojevich Superstar'

CHICAGO (AP)—Ousted Gov. Rod Blagojevich doesn't seem to mind being the butt of a theatrical joke.

Blagojevich got in on the joke Saturday evening, appearing as himself in a comedy show that lampoons the rise and fall of his own political career.

He opened The Second City's "Rod Blagojevich Superstar," a parody of the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar," standing on a chair with his arms raised as if he were being crucified.

The show—which portrays Blagojevich as greedy, tactless and hair-obsessed—opened in February and was supposed to end June 14. But production officials extended it to Aug. 9 due to constant sold-out performances.

A full house cheered as Blagojevich, who was removed from office in January and has pleaded not guilty to wide-ranging federal corruption charges, appeared on stage wearing a suit and tie.

"Where were you when I was impeached?" he asked the audience.

Blagojevich is accused of scheming to sell or trade President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat and using the muscle of the governor's office to get campaign donations. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Before the nearly hourlong show—which includes duets with an actor portraying U.S. Sen. Roland Burris—the ex-governor told the audience he hadn't seen the production before, but assured them it was a "fictitious account" of his life.

Blagojevich also worked in an endorsement of his wife, Patti, a contestant on NBC's reality show "I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!"

He asked people to vote for her to remain on the show, which asks viewers to decide which quasi-celebrity should leave a Costa Rican jungle.

NBC had wanted the former governor to compete. But U.S. District Judge James B. Zagel, who is presiding over Blagojevich's corruption case, refused to let him leave the country, so his wife joined the cast instead.

AP

The cast of the show appear to enjoy the banter between the real Rod Blagojevich, left, and actor Joey Bland, right, who played the former governor in 'Rod Blagojevich Superstar' at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Saturday, June 13, 2009 in Chicago.

Springsteen, Phish jam together at Bonnaroo

MANCHESTER, Tenn. (AP)—They were chanting "Bruuuuuce" at Bonnaroo all weekend, as Bruce Springsteen performed a three-hour set with the E Street Band one night and joined Phish on stage another.

Springsteen and Phish were the headliners at the eighth annual festival, held on a giant farm in the Tennessee hills. Phish first played Friday night, then Springsteen played Saturday. The two worlds - far apart in rock 'n' roll - combined during Phish's closing set Sunday night.

Phish frontman and guitarist Trey Anastasio introduced Springsteen as "my boyhood hero and still hero." Anastasio recalled seeing Springsteen perform when he was young as a foundational experience, forever giving him unrealistically high expectations for concerts.

With Springsteen as lead vocalist and joining Anastasio on guitar, they played Mack Rice's "Mustang Sally" and Springsteen's "Bobby Jean" and "Glory Days." Anastasio beamed throughout while the Boss immediately played bandleader, even calling for a "little more keyboard" for Page McConnell.

It was a symbolic moment for a Bonnaroo notable for its musical cross-pollination and expanded view of what it means to be a "jam band."

Though Bonnaroo was founded as a roots-rock, jam band festival, it years ago adopted a wider musical spectrum that draws from all genres, including hip-hop, heavy metal and pop. Bonnaroo's origins were easy to recall with Phish - today's pre-eminent jam band, reunited after a five-year hiatus - performing for the first time together at Bonnaroo, a festival founded in the image of the Vermont band's destination concerts.

But as Bonnaroo has grown to become arguably the country's biggest music festival, its essence still remains centered on live performance and virtuosity - which came in all sounds over the weekend.

Springsteen might rarely deviate much from his decades-long catalog, but he (again) proved there's no better showman in rock.

AP

Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band performs during the Bonnaroo Arts and Music Festival in Manchester, Tenn., Saturday, June 13, 2009.

'Slumdog' filmmakers say movie is Indian at heart

MACAU (AP)—It had a British director and was hailed at the Oscars in Los Angeles, but the box office hit "Slumdog Millionaire" is an Indian movie at heart because it embraces song and emotional expression, Bollywood filmmakers who worked on the production said Saturday.

The rags-to-riches story of an orphan from the slums of Mumbai who wins the Indian version of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" won eight Oscars in February, including best picture and best director for Danny Boyle. It has earned more than $350 million worldwide.

Speaking at the Bollywood film industry's annual roadshow weekend in the southern Chinese gambling enclave of Macau, veteran actor Anil Kapoor and sound engineer Resul Pookutty said they considered "Slumdog Millionaire" a thoroughly Indian movie.

"There's no attempt from Danny (director Danny Boyle) at any given time to shy away from using emotion, shy away from using music. That's the way Hindi films are done. We are not shying away from exposing ourselves emotionally. I think that's the greatest strength of our movies and that's what he (Boyle) picked up right on and in that sense, 'Slumdog' is a truly, originally Indian movie," Pookutty said.

A third of the movie's dialogue is also in Hindi.

But because the film was not Indian-produced, it is not among the nominees for Saturday night's International Indian Film Academy's annual awards, also in Macau.

Pookutty also said the movie has a modest soundtrack by Indian standards, saying composer A.R. Rahman wrote only 11 pieces of music for the film - compared to 160 to 170 for the average Hindi production. Both Pookutty and Rahman won Oscars for their work on the film.

Kapoor noted that the movie was based on the novel "Q & A" by Indian diplomat Vikas Swarup.

AP

Bollywood star Anil Kapoor poses before a circus at the 10th International Indian Film Academy in Macau Thursday, June 11, 2009.

'Hangover' hangs on as No. 1 movie with $33.4M

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hollywood nursed another big weekend hangover.

The Warner Bros. comedy "The Hangover" hauled in $33.4 million to remain the top box-office draw for a second-straight weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The tale of a Las Vegas bachelor party gone to extremes raised its total to $105.4 million after 10 days in theaters. It was the summer's first movie to finish at No. 1 for two weekends in a row.

Disney's latest Pixar Animation hit, the action comedy "Up," came in a close second again with $30.5 million. That lifts the acclaimed animated film's total to $187.2 million.

Debuting at No. 3 with $25 million was Sony's action remake "The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3." The thriller stars Denzel Washington as a dispatcher matching wits against John Travolta as the mastermind of a subway hijacking.

AP

U.S actors Heather Graham and Bradley Cooper arrives at a cinema in London's west end for the European premiere of The Hangover, Wednesday June 10, 2009.

Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony, said he was pleased with the results on "The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3" and that studio executives expect it to hold up well, since it drew mainly older viewers who do not rush out to see movies over opening weekend.

"Third place and happy about it," Bruer said.

Eddie Murphy delivered a dud with the Paramount family comedy "Imagine That," which debuted at No. 6 with a lackluster $5.7 million. The movie features Murphy as a workobsessed dad whose daughter's three imaginary friends make him a financial whiz with their smart stock-market picks.

The overall box office was down sharply from the same weekend a year ago, when "The Incredible Hulk" led with a $55.4 million weekend. Total revenues this weekend came in at $140 million, off 22 percent from last year's, according to Hollywood.com box-office analyst Paul Dergarabedian.

It was the third straight weekend that studio receipts declined, continuing a slide that has chilled a red-hot year for Hollywood. Earlier in the year, revenues had surged by more than 15 percent compared to 2008, but the box office now is ahead by only 11 percent.

"The growth rate for the summer box office is stalled. Every week we're systematically dropping down," Dergarabedian said. "That doesn't mean things are terrible. It just means that compared to last year, it was a great weekend for a `Hangover' but not a great weekend for the industry."

A handful of new movies did well in limited release, including Francis Ford Coppola's drama "Tetro," which took in $31,339 in two theaters for a solid average of $15,670 a cinema. That compared to an $8,133 average in 3,074 theaters for "Pelham 1 2 3" and $1,895 in 3,008 cinemas for "Imagine That."

Released by Coppola's American Zoetrope studio, "Tetro" stars Vincent Gallo as an expatriate writer forced to reacquaint himself with a painful family history when his younger brother comes to visit.

Sony Pictures Classics' sci-fi tale "Moon" pulled in $145,218 in eight theaters for an $18,152 average. The film stars Sam Rockwell as a lonesome, homesick worker on the lunar surface whose grip on reality is challenged when a second version of himself appears.

Magnolia Pictures' documentary "Food, Inc." grossed $61,400 in three theaters for a $20,467 average. The film examines the downsides and health hazards of our mass-produced food chain.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Hangover," $33.4 million.
2. "Up," $30.5 million.
3. "The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3," $25 million.
4. "Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian," $9.6 million.
5. "Land of the Lost," $9.2 million.
6. "Imagine That," $5.7 million.
7. "Star Trek," $5.6 million.
8. "Terminator Salvation," $4.7 million.
9. "Angels & Demons," $4.2 million.
10. "Drag Me to Hell," $3.9 million.

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Imagine That
Friday 4:25 7:20 9:55
Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:55
Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
Mon 4:25 7:20
Tues thru Thurs 1:30 4:25 7:20
Eddie Murphy, Yara Shahidi
Family-Oriented Comedy • Rated PG
T
Synopsis
Like many busy professionals, Evan Danielson (Eddie Murphy) is so focused on his career that quality time with his young daughter, Olivia (Yara Shahidi), has fallen by the wayside. When an important promotion is suddenly within reach, stressed-out Evan starts to fall apart while trying to fend off his company rival (Thomas Haden Church) . But when little Olivia introduces him to the inhabitants of her imaginary land, Evan rediscovers his inner child and finds the answers to all his problems.

Taking of Pelham 123
Friday 4:20 7:05 9:50
Saturday 1:20 4:20 7:05 9:50
Sunday 1:20 4:20 7:05
Mon 4:20 7:05
Tues thru Thurs 1:20 4:20 7:05
Denzel Washington, John Travolta
Thriller • Rated R
T
Synopsis
A New York City subway dispatcher draws on his extensive knowledge of the subway system in order to outsmart a dangerous criminal mastermind who's hijacked a subway train in this remake of the 1974 thriller inspired by John Godey's best-selling book. Walter Garber (Denzel Washington) was drifting through his daily routine when he received word that a heavily armed gang of four has hijacked a subway train and are holding all of the passengers hostage.

★ ★ ★

Land of the Lost
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:45
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon 4:00 7:00
Tues thru Thurs 1:00 4:00 7:00
Will Farrell, Anna Friel
Adventure, Family, Fantasy • Rated PG 13
T
Synopsis
Has-been scientist Dr. Rick Marshall, is a man with no weapons, few skills and questionable smarts who must survive an alternate universe full of marauding dinosaurs and fantastic creatures from beyond our world. Marshall has been sucked through a space-time vortex to a place of spectacular sights known as the Land of the Lost. Coming along with him for the adventure are crack-smart research assistant Holly and a redneck souvenirist named Will.

The Hangover
Friday 4:30 7:25 9:30
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:25 9:30
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:25
Mon 4:30 7:25
Tues thru Thurs 1:25 4:30 7:25
Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms
Comedy • Rated R
T

Terminator Salvation
Friday 4:15 7:30 10:00
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 10:00
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon 4:15 7:30
Tues thru Thurs 1:10 4:15 7:30
Christian Bale, Sam Worthington
Action, Sci-Fi • Rated PG 13
T

Up
Friday 4:05 7:10 9:35
Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:10 9:35
Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:10
Mon 4:05 7:10
Tues thru Thurs 1:05 4:05 7:10
Ed Asner, Jordan Nagai
Comedy, Adventure, Family • Rated PG
T

Night at the Museum 2
Friday 4:10 7:15 9:40
Saturday 1:15 4:10 7:15 9:40
Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:15
Mon 4:10 7:15
Tues thru Thurs 1:15 4:10 7:15
Den Stiller, Amy Adams
Comedy, Sequel • Rated PG
T

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Idol auditions attract thousands in Mass.

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—Yes, they were singing in the rain.

Showers and unseasonable cold winds didn't stop thousands of "American Idol" hopefuls from turning out Sunday for the show's Season Nine kickoff auditions at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass. Some showed up around 3 a.m. Sunday to grab their place in a line that eventually grew the length of the stadium and into the parking lot.

Contestants wore high heels, cowboy hats, and sported umbrellas declaring that they were the next big thing. But to move on in the competition, hopefuls had to convince the first round screeners that they were worthy of a call back.

"It would mean the world to me," said Brittany Edgett, 25, a resident of "four or five towns" in New Hampshire. "I'm just trying to make a better life for me and my daughter and my boyfriend ... trying to get a little better in life than what we've been dealt so far."

The kickoff auditions attracted around 7,000 contestants from all over the East Coast, including New England, New York and as far south as North Carolina.

Besides having talent, courage and perhaps a thick skin, auditioners must also be between the ages of 16 and 28 and eligible to work in the United States.

Tiffany "Shorty" Dorsey, 20, of Walpole, Mass., believed she had all that. While waiting in line for more than four hours, the 20-year-old used gel and other chemicals to fashion her hair into a faux mohawk. She promised to sing and dance to "Play That Funky Music" for the judges.

"I've got my friends with me. I'm loving it," Dorsey said.

Others fought to keep up with their planned wardrobe as the rains came. Melody Nardone, 26, of Buffalo, N.Y., called the weather "treacherous" while she struggled to keep her makeup fresh. "My mascara was running," Nardone said.

Host Ryan Seacrest said the bad weather may have been a plus for contestants since it likely reduced the number of contestants. "If you're auditioning, you want pouring rain, you want freezing weather," Seacrest said. "It makes the weak stay home."

His advice to contestants: Show up, sing well, move on.

Still, Marcela Cruz of Lowell, Mass. said she couldn't sleep the night before. The 18-year-old University of New Hampshire student nervously stood in line while she practiced her version of the song "Fever."

AP

"American Idol" hopeful Katelyn Streiber, 19, center, huddles with her sisters Stacey Descheneaux, 27, left, and Nicole Descheneaux, 23, right, all of Ellington, Conn., as they wait in line for auditions to begin at Gillette Stadium, in Foxborough, Mass., Sunday, June 14, 2009.

Susan Boyle pulls out of singing gig

LONDON (AP) -- Internet singing sensation Susan Boyle has pulled out of a singing engagement with the "Britain's Got Talent" live tour.

A spokesman for Boyle told Britain's Press Association that the 48-year-old singer was advised to rest on Sunday.

The Scottish singer, whose first appearance on the talent show had millions of YouTube hits, had been hospitalized a few weeks ago for exhaustion after finishing second in the competition.

The church volunteer was due on stage for a matinee and evening show at the Manchester Evening News Arena, but did not perform.

She received standing ovations at the tour's previous shows in Birmingham and Sheffield.

Obama half brother, George Obama, working on book

NEW YORK (AP) -- Another Obama relative has a book deal.

A memoir by George Obama, the president's half brother and a resident of Huruma, Kenya, will be published by Simon & Schuster in January 2010. George Obama, 27, shares the same father with his famous, older half sibling, although George and Barack Obama - 20 years apart in age - did not grow up together and did not meet as children.

George is the youngest of the senior Obama's seven children and was born six months before his father died.

Little is known about George Obama. The book, tentatively titled "Homeland" and to be written with author-journalist Damien Lewis, will tell of George Obama's fall into crime and poverty as a teenager and his eventual embrace of community organizing - a passion shared by the president - and of advocacy for the poor, an identification so strong that he chooses to live among them.

"Even had George Obama not been our President's half brother, his story is moving and inspirational," David Rosenthal, Simon & Schuster publisher and executive vice president, said in a statement Sunday. "It is an object lesson in survival, selflessness and courage."

Financial terms were not disclosed, but an official with knowledge of the negotiations said the deal was worth six figures. The official, who was not authorized to discuss the contract, spoke on condition of anonymity.

Other Obama relatives are working on books, including a half sister, Maya Soetoro-Ng; and the brother of first lady Michelle Obama, Craig Robinson. Duke University Press is releasing the doctoral dissertation of the president's mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, who died in 1995.

Barack Obama has written a pair of million-selling books, "The Audacity of Hope" and "Dreams from My Father," in which he describes George Obama as "a handsome, round-headed boy with a wary gaze."

Dolly Parton surprises Girl Scouts, presents badge

PIGEON FORGE, Tennessee (AP) — Country singer Dolly Parton delighted hundreds of Tennessee Girl Scouts when she made a surprise entrance at a ceremony to present them with a patch created in her honor.

Parton appeared on stage at the Pines Theatre in Pigeon Forge, where 400 Girl Scouts were receiving the new "Coat of Many Colors" patch. It is named for Parton and her 1971 song of the same name.

Parton is a lifetime member of the Girl Scouts. She wore her own uniform, hugged and chatted with the girls on Saturday.

The song tells the story of how schoolmates made fun of a coat Parton's mother made from rags. The patch requires Scouts to help others, then design a collage of what makes them special

Parton told the girls, "A person can make money, but money can't make a person."

AP

Dolly Parton, center, poses with young ladies for a group photo during a celebration for Girl Scouts from the Tanasi Council at the Pines Theatre in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., Saturday, June 13, 2009.

Young filmmakers honored at Student Academy Awards

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—Thirteen college students received cash prizes and trophies Saturday for films competing in the 36th annual Student Academy Awards.

The gold medal prize for narrative films went to Gregg Helvey of the University of Southern California for "Kavi," a short film about an Indian boy forced to work.

The top prize for animation was presented to Glenn Harmon of Brigham Young University for "Pajama Gladiator," a computer-animated short film about a boy who gets caught stealing cookies in the middle of the night.

A complete list of the winners in each category:

Narrative:

■ Gold Medal: "Kavi," Gregg Helvey, University of Southern California.

■ Silver Medal: "The Bronx Balletomane," Jeremy Joffee, The City College of New York.

■ Bronze Medal: "Bohemibot," Brendan Bellomo, New York University.

Animation:

■ Gold Medal: "Pajama Gladiator," Glenn Harmon, Brigham Young University.

■ Silver Medal: "Sebastian's Voodoo," Joaquin Baldwin, University of California, Los Angeles.

■ Bronze Medal: "Kites," Jed Henry, Brigham Young University.

Documentary:

■ Gold Medal: "The Last Mermaids," Liz Chae, Columbia University.

■ Silver Medal: "The Wait," Cassandra Lizaire and Kelly Asmuth, Columbia University.

■ Bronze Medal: "A Place to Land," Lauren DeAngelis, American University, Washington, D.C.

Alternative:

■ Gold Medal: "Alice's Attic," Robyn Yannoukos, University of California, Los Angeles.

■ Silver Medal: "Matter, in a Quiescent State, Prepares Itself to Be Transformed," Kwibum Chung, School of Visual Arts, New York.

Honorary Foreign Film:

■ "Elkland," Per Hanefjord, Dramatiska Institutet, Sweden.

Trent Reznor says Bonnaroo his last US concert

MANCHESTER, Tenn. (AP)—Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor said their performance Sunday at the Bonnaroo Music Festival was their last in the country.

The industrial rock group performed in the early morning hours Sunday at the Tennessee festival, shortly after Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band wrapped up.

"It just dawned on me that this is our last show ever in the United States," Reznor said during his band's set. "Don't be sad. I'll keep going. But I think I'm going to lose my ... mind if I keep doing this, and I have to stop."

Nine Inch Nails just completed a U.S. tour with Jane's Addiction. Their summer tour continues in Europe and Asia. The tour, dubbed "Wave Goodbye," was conceived as a farewell tour to mark the 20th anniversary of their first album, "Pretty Hate Machine."

Nine Inch Nails Trent Reznor performs during the Bonnaroo Arts and Music Festival in Manchester, Tenn., Sunday, June 14, 2009.

AP

Reluctant bridesmaid looks for graceful way to bow out

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm in my early 20s and have worked for this company for a few years. One of my co-workers is my age and has always been very sweet. We talk occasionally about casual events in our lives, but I have never socialized with her outside of work and don't consider her more than a "work friend."

When she became engaged, I told her I was happy for her and admired her ring. Out of the blue she asked me to be a bridesmaid! I was taken by surprise, but she looked so hopeful that I agreed. I realize now it was a huge mistake.

She is a nice girl, but we talk only at work, maybe three times a month. She has also asked two other girls from work to be a bridesmaid and maid of honor. They are in the same boat as I am, and both were also shocked to have been asked.

The wedding is a year and a half away. I am worried that it will cost me money. Don't bridesmaids have to buy their own dresses? I would never want someone in my wedding who didn't want to be there and who honestly didn't consider herself my friend. Is there an appropriate way to get out of this and not hurt her feelings?

DISTRESSED IN SAN DIEGO

DEAR DISTRESSED: It is not necessary to tell your co-worker that you do not consider her a friend. But do tell her that, while you are flattered that she asked you to be a bridesmaid, you responded impulsively without thinking it through and that it would create a financial hardship for you—which is why you must decline. Obviously, this young woman has no close friends, so do her a favor by not making this a topic of conversation at the office.

P.S. You are correct that it is the responsibility of the bridesmaid to pay for her own outfit.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am the middle child in a family of seven children. Somewhere along the way I was assigned the role of peacemaker. I have always been the person everyone goes to for help—mostly financial—but also for other reasons. This has caused a strain on my relationship with my significant other, "Jake."

Jake's family is not close, and he did not have a pleasant childhood. My family is sometimes too close, and we depend on each other too much. Jake accuses me of "always jumping on my white horse and riding off to save the world" and says I neglect him. He wants me to have nothing to do with my family and complains that they call too often. I do not neglect him. He is the one turning this into a big issue.

I am always there for Jake, but he is very controlling and I feel caught in the middle all the time, trying to keep him happy and not hurt my family's feelings. How can I stay true to who I am and what I believe is right and still maintain this relationship, which I have been in for more than 17 years?

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

DEAR CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE: You and Jake need to reach a compromise. It is unrealistic of him to expect you to have nothing to do with your family. As caring as you are, however, you need to accept that you were not born to continually bail your siblings out of their financial difficulties.

My advice to you is to "be there" for your family when mediation is necessary, but tighten your purse strings. If you do, I'll bet there will be fewer phone calls, less rescuing and more peace in your household.

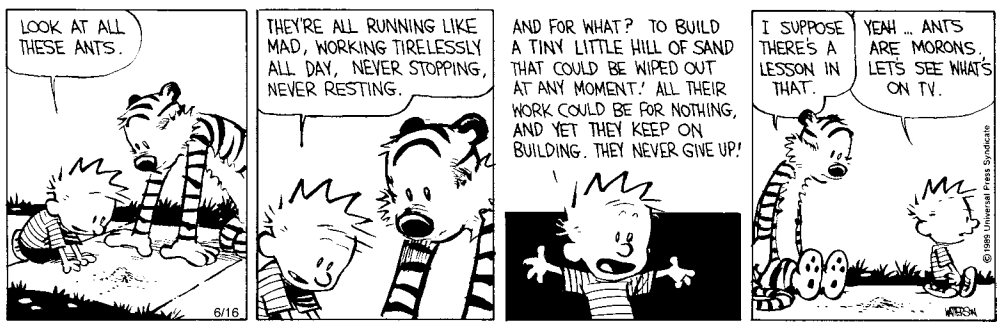
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." To order, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LOOK AT ALL THESE ANTS.
THEY'RE ALL RUNNING LIKE MAD, WORKING TIRELESSLY ALL DAY, NEVER STOPPING, NEVER RESTING.
AND FOR WHAT? TO BUILD A TINY LITTLE HILL OF SAND THAT COULD BE WIPED OUT AT ANY MOMENT. ALL THEIR WORK COULD BE FOR NOTHING, AND YET THEY KEEP ON BUILDING. THEY NEVER GIVE UP!
I SUPPOSE THERE'S A LESSON IN THAT.
YEAH ... ANTS ARE MORONS. LET'S SEE WHAT'S ON TV.
6/16
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Garfield®

By Jim Davis

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JIM DAVIS 6-16
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DOES IT HURT MUCH?
DON'T EVER LET ME DO THAT AGAIN
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Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

OKAY, SON. IT'S TIME FOR A NEW FAMILY RITUAL: THE SUMMERTIME BASEMENT PURGE.
WHAT'S "PURGE" MEAN?
"CAUSE THE EVACUATION OF... MAKE FREE OF SOMETHING UNWANTED... GET RID OF..."
WOW. HOW DID YOU KNOW ALL THAT?
YOUR MOTHER WROTE IT ALL DOWN AS A REMINDER.
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The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HAVE YOU MET DON, OUR NEW NEIGHBOR?
YEAH. NICE GUY.
THIS MAY SOUND CRAZY, BUT I'M STARTING TO SUSPECT THAT HE MAY BE AN EX-MOBSTER IN THE WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY HE'S BEEN PAYING ME A BUCK EVERY MORNING TO START HIS CAR.
6-16
Glenn McCoy
2009 © Glenn McCoy/dist. by Universal Press Syndicate

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

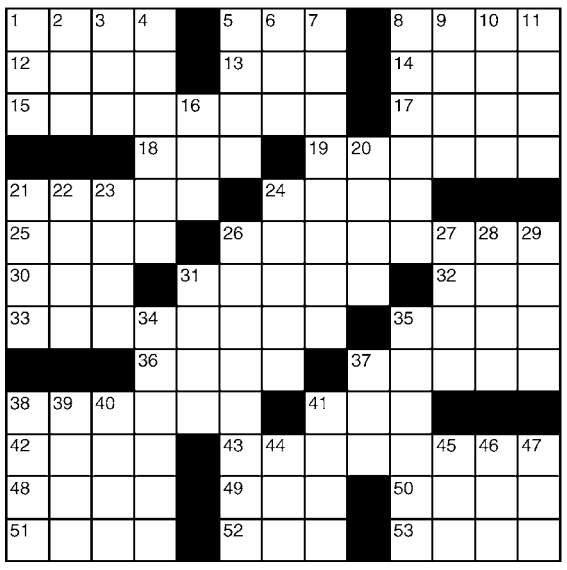
ACROSS
1 Speech imperfection
5 Oklahoma city
8 Rose feature
12 Job-safety grp.
13 Jewel
14 "The Audacity of —"
15 Stir-fry condiment
17 Foolish bloke
18 That girl
19 Ditch
21 Brazilian dance
24 Good, to a rapper
25 Satiate
26 "Hee Haw" co-host
30 Venomous viper
31 Sibling of Peter Rabbit
32 Tiny
33 Merit badge earner, perhaps
35 Took the bus
36 Overly theatrical
37 Boutique
38 King's perch
41 Journal
42 Coffin stand
43 Buzz Lightyear's movie
48 Harmonization
49 Pair
50 Met melody
51 Trail
52 Tho'
53 Understand intuitively

DOWN
1 Part of UCLA
2 Equi-
3 Bashful
4 Elapse
5 Chills and fever
6 Year-end abbr.
7 February birthstone
8 Jewish village in Eastern Europe
9 Grover's Corners, e.g.
10 Grand-scale tale
11 Illicit stimulant, for short
16 "Eureka!"
20 Risque
21 Wound cover
22 As well
23 Tending to brood (Var.)
24 Annoying ad on a PC
26 Sleeping-car area
27 MPs' quarry
28 Start over
29 Acute
31 Thom — shoes
34 Burn around the edges
35 Unkempt
37 "Mayday!"
38 Recipe meas.
39 Informal greeting
40 "La Boheme" based musical
41 City on the Rhône
44 Have bills
45 Bobby of hockey lore
46 Carnival city
47 Tibetan critter

Solution time: 21 mins.

E	L	M	■	A	R	E	A	S	■	A	N	T
S	E	A	■	S	A	M	B	A	■	L	O	Y
P	A	P	A	L	B	U	L	L	■	A	S	P
■	■	■	L	E	I	■	E	M	B	R	Y	O
G	A	S	P	E	D	■	R	O	O	M	■	■
Y	E	P	■	P	L	Y	■	N	O	B	E	L
M	O	O	D	■	Y	E	S	■	M	E	T	A
S	N	O	U	T	■	N	I	B	■	L	A	C
■	■	N	E	W	T	■	D	R	O	L	L	Y
D	E	B	T	O	R	■	E	A	R	■	■	■
U	R	I	■	B	E	A	C	H	B	A	L	L
N	I	L	■	I	S	L	A	M	■	P	E	A
K	E	L	■	T	S	A	R	S	■	T	O	P

Yesterday's answer 6-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Keshia Chante, 21; Ben Zweller, 28; Joan Van Ark, 66; Joyce Carol Oates, 71

Happy Birthday: You have a unique sense of style that you must put to good use in order to stand above the competition. Use your intuition to guide you and your sensitivity toward others to know when to forge ahead and when to pull back. Love and romance will highlight your year. Your numbers are 9, 15, 23, 25, 27, 32, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Your emotions will be hard to control. Don't let anyone's actions cause you to make a costly mistake. Taking a back seat until things settle down will be beneficial but not easy to do. Time is on your side. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You can make some very interesting observations that will protect your interests and help you with personal and professional relationships. Use your charm to get others to see your potential. Be adventuresome but practical. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Take on a new challenge and you will prove your ability to someone who may have questioned you in the past. You will have the chance to make some cash by investing in something that is slow-growing but stable. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Someone you trust will let you down, causing emotional upset that will affect your status. Be ready to make a fast move in order to spare as much notoriety as possible. Someone you least expect will help you rebuild and find new footing. ✪✪

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Take a chance on someone who you feel will eventually contribute to one of your projects, causes or your life. You can expect to come into cash through an unusual means. Don't rule out being paid for something you didn't expect to benefit from financially. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): A short trip that will bring you knowledge, information or a better understanding of what's being offered will pay off. A responsible attitude will prove that you are in the right and that you should proceed without guilt. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You'll be pulled in several different directions. A partnership can develop or you can come to terms with someone you disagree with. Travel plans should be made, mixing business with pleasure. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Look for change instead of trying to hold onto something that is weighing you down. You have to let go of grudges and replace negativity with a positive attitude. A new partnership can be good for you. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll be convincing but not everyone will buy into your scheme. Beware of the person able to upset your plans and turn people against you. Being viewed as a spendthrift will sabotage your efforts. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can make some adjustments at home that will further your goals. Getting your papers in order will lead to an asset you forgot you had. Someone or something you used to know or do will aid you in getting further ahead. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Plan to have some fun with someone you find interesting, entertaining and unique. Your ability to help others can be put to good use if you don't let your emotions get the better of you. Stay calm and you will handle with finesse any situation that crops up. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Avoid erratic behavior. You may want to keep your personal life a secret until you know where you stand and what's going to unfold. Now is not the time to share your ideas or to let others see your vulnerability. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a team player and a great friend, partner and companion. You are outspoken, outgoing, compassionate, caring and playful.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

					4			
	1				7		6	
6		7		2		4		9
9	2		3		5			
		6		4		8		
			9		8		2	3
4		3		7		2		5
	5		2				8	
			4					

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Difficulty Level ★★ 6/16

Monday's SUDOKU Answer

1	2	4	9	3	8	6	5	7
5	3	6	2	4	7	9	1	8
9	7	8	1	5	6	2	4	3
4	8	9	7	2	1	5	3	6
7	6	5	4	8	3	1	2	9
2	1	3	5	6	9	8	7	4
8	4	1	3	9	2	7	6	5
6	5	2	8	7	4	3	9	1
3	9	7	6	1	5	4	8	2

Difficulty Level ★ 6/15

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

AUSTRALIA'S DROUGHT **Solution: 8 letters**

E	E	T	C	E	N	I	L	S	R	E	D	Y	O	G
A	E	N	C	O	U	N	T	E	R	B	A	Y	S	S
A	D	G	E	E	O	L	H	L	R	D	R	M	O	D
N	N	E	D	W	T	R	A	L	I	E	T	U	C	L
L	I	I	L	I	S	O	O	K	C	P	M	R	A	E
A	N	S	R	A	B	O	R	N	E	T	O	R	N	I
G	E	S	A	D	I	M	U	P	G	P	U	A	A	F
O	M	A	W	B	N	D	U	T	S	R	T	Y	L	F
O	R	T	G	O	A	A	E	R	H	A	H	D	B	Y
N	O	T	T	O	C	R	X	S	R	W	D	A	E	L
R	E	V	I	R	B	O	H	E	E	U	A	R	R	P
H	U	M	E	D	A	M	R	A	L	R	M	L	T	P
D	N	A	L	Y	R	D	G	N	M	A	T	I	E	U
E	G	L	I	O	S	C	R	U	B	L	A	N	D	S
E	G	R	A	I	N	O	I	T	A	T	E	G	E	V

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Acreage, Adelaide, Albert, Alexandrina, Barham, Basin, Boga, Canal, Coorong, Corn, Cotton, Cows, Crops, Dartmouth Dam, Dept., Desert, Dryland, Encounter Bay, Farmer, Fields, Goyders Line, Grain, Hume Dam, Lagoon, Lake, Menindee, Murray Darling, Murrumbidgee, New South Wales, Protect, Rice, River, Rural, Scrubland, Sell, Soil, Supply, Vegetation

Yesterday's Answer: Millbrook

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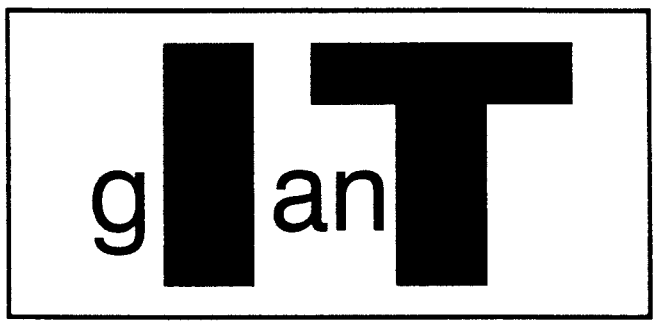

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Find today's solution in this section

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Opening Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2009 Closing Date: Monday, June 22, 2009

JVA No. 09-017 Trades Assistant (Three positions)
JVA No. 09-018 Trades Technician (Three positions)
JVA No. 09-019 Trades Specialist (Electrician, One position)

Location: Water Wastewater Division, Saipan.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Opening Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2009 Closing Date: Thursday, June 18, 2009

JVA No. 09-020 Meter Reader (Two positions)
JVA No. 09-021 Accounting Technician (Two positions)

Location: Billing Section, Saipan.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Opening Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2009 Closing Date: Until Filled

JVA No. 09-023 Information Technology Specialist (One position)
JVA No. 09-024 Information Technology Manager (One position)

Location: Administration, Saipan.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Opening Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 Closing Date: Monday, June 29, 2009

JVA No. 09-025 Trades Assistant (Ten positions)

Location: Power Division, Saipan.

For information on the duties and minimum qualifications, please stop by the Human Resources Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan.

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

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• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Yankees rough up Santana, rout Mets 15-0

AP

New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter tags out New York Mets' David Wright (5) on a throw from Mark Teixeira during the second inning of an interleague baseball game Friday, June 12, 2009, in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—Derek Jeter and the Yankees hammered pitcher Johan Santana in a 15-0 thrashing of the Mets on Sunday for the biggest blowout in Subway Series history.

Jeter hit all four pitches he faced and the Yankees got two-run homers from Hideki Matsui and Robinson Cano in a nine-run fourth inning, chasing Santana early to take two of three in a testy interleague baseball series at Yankee Stadium.

Mets closer Francisco Rodriguez shouted at Yankees reliever Brian Bruney in left field during batting practice and the two were separated by teammates, one day after they exchanged barbs through the media.

The Yankees needed only four innings to set a season high for runs in a game, building a huge cushion for A.J. Burnett (5-3). They finished with 17 hits, three by No. 9 batter Francisco Cervelli, and pulled several stars before the seventh.

Phillies 11, Red Sox 6

At Philadelphia, Jimmy Rollins homered as part of a six-run seventh inning to help Philadelphia avoid a three-game sweep and beat Boston.

Rollins led off the seventh with a tiebreaking home run off Josh Beckett (7-3) that helped turn this one into a rout. Pedro Feliz added a two-RBI double, and Rollins was hit with a pitch and the bases loaded to make it 10-5.

Rollins had three RBIs to salvage the finale and help the Phillies improve to 13-16 at home.

Rockies 7, Mariners 1

At Denver, Garrett Atkins and Todd Helton had three hits each as Colorado beat Seattle to match a franchise record with their 11th straight win.

Brad Hawpe doubled twice and Clint Barmes had two hits for Colorado, which has swept three straight series and is 13-4 under interim manager Jim Tracy.

The Rockies won 11 straight from Sept. 16-27, 2007, when they surged to the National League Wild Card. They won 14 of their last 15 that season, including a one-game playoff against San Diego to win the Wild Card.

Orioles 11, Braves 2

At Baltimore, Ty Wigginton hit two home runs, Robert Andino drove in three runs and stole home and Brad Bergesen pitched his first complete game to lead Baltimore over Atlanta.

The Orioles have scored 19 runs in the past two games, after scoring just 19 runs in the previous 11 games.

Marlins 11, Blue Jays 3

At Toronto, Ronny Paulino hit two home runs and Josh Johnson pitched his second complete game of the season as Florida beat Toronto.

The Marlins took the three-game series and won their eighth in a row overall at Toronto. The Blue Jays lost their fourth straight game and fell to 0-6 in interleague play.

Paulino went 4 for 5, scoring three runs and driving in three with his first career multihomer game. He hit a two-run drive in the second inning and added a solo shot in the ninth.

Pirates 6, Tigers 3

At Pittsburgh, Dontrelle Willis fought with his control for the third consecutive start by walking eight batters in 3 2-3 innings to lead to all of Pittsburgh past Detroit.

Robinzon Diaz drove in three runs and Ross Ohlendorf (6-5) limited Detroit to one run and two hits over six innings for his first victory since May 18.

The Tigers got to within 6-3 on Don Kelly's two-run single in the seventh off Steven Jackson, but lost for the second time in the three-game interleague series during a bad weekend for Detroit teams against Pittsburgh's.

White Sox 5, Brewers 4

At Milwaukee, A.J. Pierzynski singled with two outs in the ninth inning off previously perfect Trevor Hoffman and starter Mark Buehrle hit his first career home run to lift Chicago over Milwaukee.

Corey Hart homered twice and Casey McGehee added another solo shot for the Brewers, who've lost six of seven. Milwaukee went 1-5 on its homestand.

Rays 5, Nationals 4

At St. Petersburg, Florida, pinch hitter Willy Aybar got a lucky bounce, doubling off the third base bag in the eighth inning as Tampa Bay completed a sweep of lowly Washington.

Gabe Kapler added a homer and three RBIs for Tampa Bay. Dan Wheeler (2-1) worked a perfect eighth and J.P. Howell pitched the ninth for his third save.

Alberto Gonzalez drove in three runs for the Nationals, who have lost 15 of 18.

Cubs 3, Twins 2

At Chicago, Ryan Theriot drove in Derrek Lee with a bases-loaded single with one out in the ninth as Chicago beat Minnesota to snap a four-game losing streak.

After Carlos Marmol (2-1) escaped a jam in the top of the ninth, the Cubs pulled it out in the bottom half and avoided a three-game sweep.

Royals 7, Reds 1

At Kansas City, Missouri, Brian Bannister pitched eight sharp innings, Miguel Olivo homered and drove in four runs as Kansas City took advantage of sloppy fielding to beat Cincinnati for a three-game sweep.

Kansas City outscored the Reds 18-6 in the series.

Dodgers 6, Rangers 3

At Arlington, Texas, Chad Billingsley earned his NL-best ninth victory, retiring 16 of 17 batters after an early error put the Dodgers behind, and Casey Blake drove in four runs for Los Angeles in a victory over American League West-leading Texas.

Jones homered for the second day in a row against the Dodgers leading off the fourth.

Angels 6, Padres 0

At Anaheim, California, Juan Rivera homered twice, Jered Weaver pitched his first career shutout as the Angels beat San Diego to complete a three-game sweep.

Weaver (7-2) worked quickly on the mound and struck out five while only giving up five hits. He threw 119 pitches, 80 strikes, and won his fourth straight. It was the third complete game of his career — all have come this season.

Giants 7, Athletics 1

At San Francisco, Nate Schierholtz hit an inside-the-park three-run homer and Matt Cain pitched a four-hitter for his seventh straight win as San Francisco beat Oakland for a three-game sweep.

Pablo Sandoval added a two-run homer and Andres Torres matched his career high with three hits as the Giants won for the ninth time in 12 games.

Cain (9-1) ended a four-start losing streak against the A's. He retired 15 straight batters after Jack Cust's third-inning double before pinch-hitter Nomar Garciaparra reached on an error in the eighth.

Astros 8, Diamondbacks 3

At Phoenix, Hunter Pence ended a slump with a homer and Lance Berkman also homered to help Houston beat Arizona.

Brian Moehler (3-4) scattered six hits over six innings for the Astros, who won for the fourth time in five games. The right-hander allowed three runs, struck out two and walked two for his third win in four starts.

Stephen Drew and Mark Reynolds homered for the Diamondbacks, who have lost five of seven. Arizona is 0-5-1 in six homestands under A.J. Hinch, who took over for the fired Bob Melvin on May 8.

Indians 3, Cardinals 0

At Cleveland, Cliff Lee threw seven innings of no-hit ball before settling for a three-hitter to give Cleveland a win over St. Louis.

Lee (4-6) allowed only two first-inning walks until Yadier Molina opened the eighth with an opposite-field drive down the right-field line that hit off the wall for a double.

Mark DeRosa hit a two-run homer in the first inning and Kelly Shoppach got a solo shot in the fifth off Chris Carpenter (4-1), who won the NL Cy Young in 2005.

Torrealba reunited with son after kidnapping

DENVER (AP)—Colorado Rockies catcher Yorvit Torrealba felt the fear cut through him. His 11-year-old son was in the hands of kidnappers and he thought the boy was going to die.

Torrealba sat by the phone in Venezuela, listening to his wife negotiate with the kidnappers. It was thought best that Torrealba not do the talking.

"It's something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy," he said. "For three days I couldn't sleep, I couldn't drink water. I felt like my hands were tied and I couldn't do anything."

Torrealba spoke of his ordeal Sunday, the first time he has done so since Yorvit Eduardo was released by his abductors. Now, nearly two weeks later, his son is fine and with him in Denver

"Overall, he's happy, he's good," Torrealba said before the Rockies played Seattle. "When we were in Miami I took him to the park, to the mall just to have a normal life again. He's doing really good."

His son saw a doctor twice while in Miami.

"The first time he saw the doctor, all he talked about was what happened," Torrealba said. "The second time, he was talking about stuff we were doing. He's doing better. He's making progress."

Torrealba's son will be at Coors Field on Tuesday when the Rockies open a three-game series against Tampa Bay. He said he and his wife will stay in the U.S.

"They'll stay here in the States for a while," he said. "We're looking for a school for my son down in Miami."

Torrealba said the kidnapping began June 2 when a car pulled in front of the car taking his son to school. His son was with Daniel Antonio Alvarez Morales, Torrealba's 31-year-old brother-in-law, and Agrey Alexander Marquez, a 27-year-old brother-in-law of the boy's mother.

"Three guys with guns put them in the back seat and just drove away to a big hill," Torrealba said. "They covered their faces and a half-hour later one of the guys called my wife and told his mother they were kidnapping her son," Torrealba said.

"It took about two days. They spent the night on the hill, and all day the next day. Then around eight o'clock they let them go. ... For whatever reason they let him go before they got the money. They ran to the closest house and asked if they could use the phone. He called my wife and let her know she was fine. This house was a half hour away from my house, so right away we found someone over there to get him."

The kidnappers demanded $500,000 at first, according to Torrealba, then dropped their demands to $150,000 and then $50,000.

"Those guys wanted to talk to me because they had an idea how much money I was having and the only one who could move it," he said. "That's why the cops believe it's an inside job—family member or a friend. They were trying to take advantage of the situation, maybe somebody, they say, from the inside."

Calhoun released from hospital after bike accident

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—Connecticut basketball coach Jim Calhoun is out of the hospital, a day after breaking five ribs in a bicycle accident.

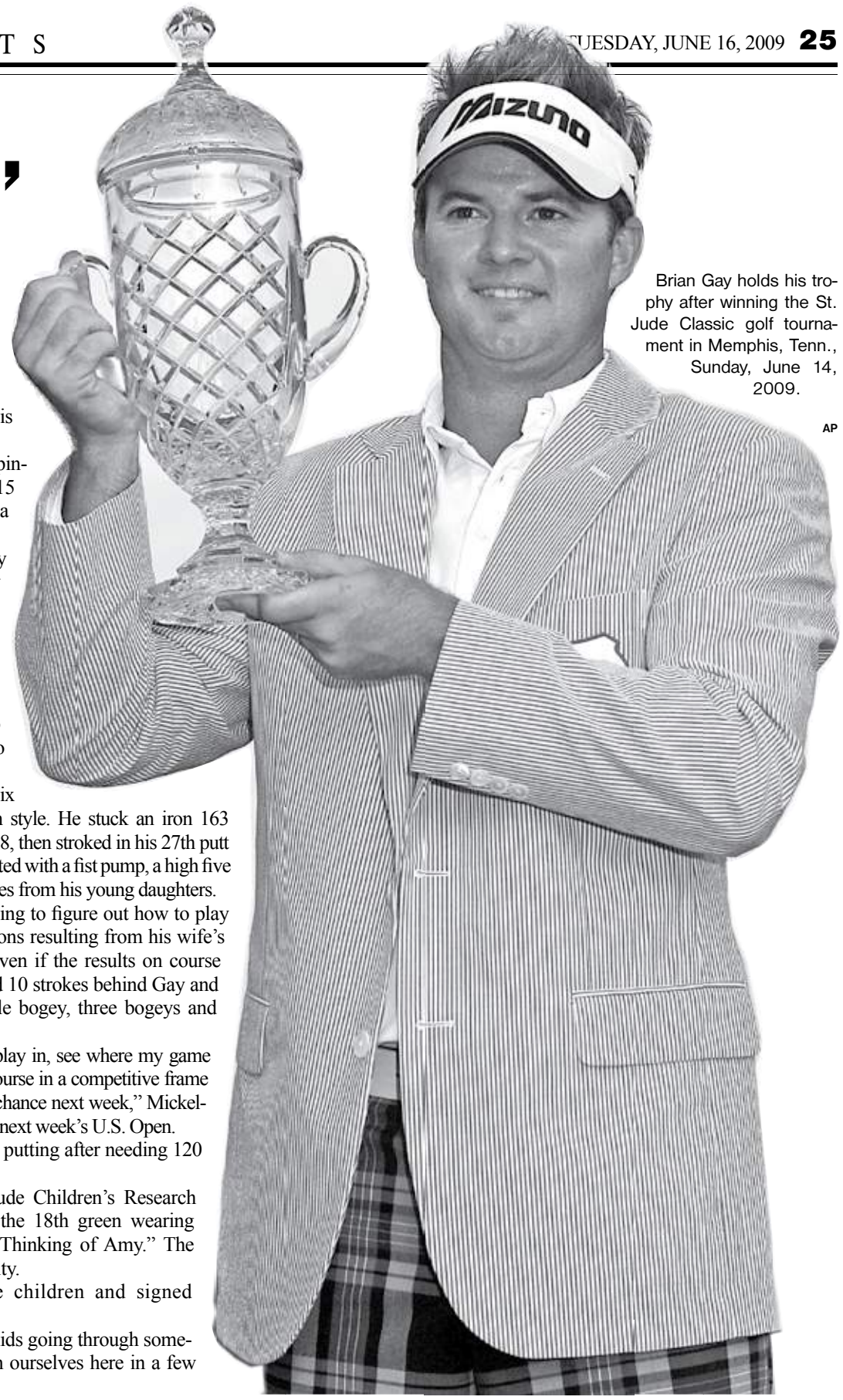
Calhoun, 67, biked at least 16 miles after hitting a pothole and falling during Saturday's 50-mile annual Jim Calhoun Cancer Challenge Ride bike ride.

He completed the ride but collapsed while talking to friends near the finish line in Simsbury. He was taken to the UConn Medical Center in Farmington where he was treated for his injuries and dehydration.

After being released from the hospital Sunday, Calhoun said he planned to "go home and rest for a couple of days."

Calhoun is a three-time cancer survivor. Organizers say the ride may have raised up to $300,000 for Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center at the hospital.

Gay wins wire-to-wire, earns US Open berth



Brian Gay holds his trophy after winning the St. Jude Classic golf tournament in Memphis, Tenn., Sunday, June 14, 2009.

AP

ST. JUDE CLASSIC

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Brian Gay thought so little of his chance to play his way into the U.S. Open in his last possible chance that he had plans for a week off. Not even a tentative plan sketched out just in case.

Well, he better figure something out pretty quick. His wire-to-wire victory Sunday in the St. Jude Classic punched his ticket to Bethpage Black.

"Right now I don't know if we're going home first or what we're going to do, whether we spend tomorrow traveling, going home and repacking," Gay said. "Get to work on Tuesday I guess."

Gay came to Memphis as one of seven players with a chance to grab the Open exemption as a multiple winner in the last calendar year. He responded with his second win in his last five events and the third victory of his career, beating David Toms and Bryce Molder by five strokes.

"I felt I had to go out and play golf. If I won, I'd get the chance to play," Gay said.

He grabbed the $1,008,000 winner's check at TPC Southwind in runaway style, too.

Gay led by only a stroke after each of the first three rounds, then shot his third straight 4-under 66 to pull away. He birdied three of the first six holes to take all the suspense out of the final round, and birdied the 18th to finish at 18-under 262.

Toms finished with a 65, and Molder had a 70. John Senden (64), Paul Goydos (68) and Robert Allenby (69) tied for fourth at 12 under.

"It was a pretty good golf tournament except for one guy stealing the show," said Toms, the tournament winner in 2003 and 2004.

Phil Mickelson, in his first event since announcing wife Amy has breast cancer, and John Daly, returning from a six-month PGA Tour suspension, tied for 59th at 1 over. Mickelson closed with a 75, and Daly shot a 70.

It wasn't as large a victory as in April when Gay won by 10 at Hilton Head. It just felt like that on a day where no one could get close enough on wet fairways that stopped balls with almost no roll. Officials had moved up the start by four hours hoping to beat incoming storms that popped up in the morning to delay the start of the final round—by four hours. It didn't rain again.

Gay needed only 100 putts to become the fourth wire-to-wire winner in the tournament's 52-year history and first since Justin Leonard in 2005.

Gay started pulling away on the par-3 fourth. After his tee shot landed near the pin and rolled 20 feet past, he rolled in the birdie putt to reach 16 under. Molder hit into a bunker and bogeyed—a swing that gave Gay a four-stroke lead. Gay rolled in a 30-footer on No. 6 and a 17-footer on No. 9 for birdies.

The club let him down on his two bogeys.

He found a greenside bunker pin-high on No. 7 and blasted out to 15 feet, but two-putted. He missed a 9-footer for par on No. 10.

But Gay made up for that by sticking an iron a foot away for birdie on the par-3 11th—the island green—for birdie to go back to 17. That's when Molder was convinced this was Gay's tournament.

"I didn't even get close to catching him," said Molder, who had his best finish on tour.

From there on, Gay parred six straight holes before finishing in style. He stuck an iron 163 yards to 5 feet of the pin on No. 18, then stroked in his 27th putt of the round for birdie. He celebrated with a fist pump, a high five with his caddie and hugs and kisses from his young daughters.

Mickelson spent the week trying to figure out how to play golf and deal with all the emotions resulting from his wife's illness. He accomplished that even if the results on course didn't. He started the final round 10 strokes behind Gay and shot the 75 that featured a triple bogey, three bogeys and three birdies.

"I needed to get a little bit of play in, see where my game was at and get back on the golf course in a competitive frame of mind if I was going to have a chance next week," Mickelson said. "I'm looking forward to next week's U.S. Open.

Now he wants to focus on his putting after needing 120 putt this week.

Six children treated at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital met him coming off the 18th green wearing shirts and a banner that read "Thinking of Amy." The hospital is this event's lone charity.

Mickelson talked with the children and signed their shirts.

"These are some pretty cool kids going through something we're going to go through ourselves here in a few weeks," he said.

Orton gets nod to be Broncos' starting QB

NFL

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—Kyle Orton was selected to be the starting quarterback for the Denver Broncos on Saturday.

Broncos coach Josh McDaniels decided to end the suspense early heading into next month's training camp.

Orton had been competing this offseason with Chris Simms for the starting spot left open by the blockbuster deal that sent Jay Cutler to the Chicago Bears on April 3.

But McDaniels apparently liked what he saw in Orton's assimilation to the offense over the past several months to give the three-year veteran the edge for now, stressing there was still time for Simms to take away the job.

Also, wide receiver Brandon Marshall was again a no-show at minicamp, one day after a face-to-face meeting with team owner Pat Bowlen that did not include McDaniels.

Marshall is unhappy with both his contract and what he considered a misdiagnosis of a hip injury last season and has been working out on his own in Orlando, Fla.

"Hopefully it'll all end up the way we want it to end up with him on the field here," McDaniels said. "If and when Brandon's out here with us, it'll be great." Bowlen declined comment.

McDaniels informed Orton of the quarterback news Friday night, and the former Chicago Bears quarterback took all the snaps behind the first-team offensive line during Saturday's practice.

"There's a lot of difficult aspects about what we ask our quarterback to do in our offense and Kyle has really grasped some of them more quickly than Chris did," McDaniels said in explaining the move after the second day of a three-day minicamp at the team's Dove Valley headquarters.

"I just think it puts them in a little bit of a pressure situation where now one of them has it and has to keep it and the other one has to get it," McDaniels added. "They're still going to compete with each other and I expect the competition to be the same that it's been. They both have great attitudes and know that nothing's determined in June."

Orton completed 272 of 465 passes for 2,812 yards with Chicago last season, throwing 18 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. He's appeared in 33 games during his three-year career.

Like Simms, he's had to adjust to a new team and offense. But he's also demonstrated less rust than Simms, who hasn't played since Week 3 of the 2006 season due to complications from a ruptured spleen while playing for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

"I'm obviously really excited," said Orton, who was a key piece to the Cutler deal that also included four high draft picks. "It's really just the beginning for me in this offense and hopefully I'll continue to improve every day and get the offense where we need to be come the season."

Orton said that it's been difficult trying to find a comfort level in McDaniels' offense and that he's had good and bad plays along the way.

That was evident Saturday, when Orton had interceptions run back for scores by cornerback Jack Williams and outside linebacker Robert Ayers. But Orton also lofted a perfect sideline pass into the arms of rookie running back Knowshon Moreno in tight coverage.

"Kyle's extremely underrated," Simms said. "I've always felt that way. He was underrated in college and with the Bears. He throws the ball very well. He's a smart guy. He's a big guy. There's a lot of plusses with Kyle."

Simms wasn't surprised that McDaniels decided to make the news public now instead of waiting until training camp.

"We can't both go in there as 1-A and 1-B," he said.

Trent Green retires after 15 seasons

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Former Pro Bowl quarterback Trent Green has decided to retire after 15 seasons and plans to pursue a career in broadcasting.

Agent Jim Steiner said Green was proud of a career that included a Super Bowl ring with the Rams and two Pro Bowl appearances with Kansas City, but was ready to get onto the next phase of his life.

"He thinks it's the right time," Steiner said Friday. "He had a long, prosperous, very successful career. He believes he can still play, but the demand isn't real high out there right now and he's not the type of guy who's going to sit around for four or five months waiting for the phone to ring."

Green, an eighth-round draft pick by San Diego in 1993, was released by St. Louis in February after playing three games in his second stint with the Rams last season.

Green, 38, earned a Super Bowl ring in his first go-round with the Rams in 2000, but had to watch Kurt Warner lead the Rams to their first title after injuring his knee in a preseason game.

His best years were in Kansas City from 2001-06, when Green earned two trips to the Pro Bowl (2003, 2005) and threw for more than 4,000 yards in three straight seasons.

Dick Vermeil, who coached Green with the Chiefs, said Green called him Friday morning to let him know of his decision.

"For three years in a row, Trent had a 90 quarterback efficiency rating," Vermeil said from his home in Pennsylvania. "He was the only quarterback in the league who did that at that time. I don't know what more you can ask a guy to do. Very few did it better than him during the five years he was with the Chiefs."

Green's career was put in jeopardy after a severe concussion with the Chiefs in 2006 and another early the following season with Miami, but he re-signed with the Rams and served as Marc Bulger's backup last season.

Green, who also played four seasons in Washington, threw for 28,475 yards and had 162 TD passes with 114 interceptions. His retirement was first reported by FOXSports.com.

"He wanted to be proactive and will pursue a career in broadcasting," Steiner said. "He feels good about his career, but it's time to move one."

KOBE

From Page 28

man enjoy it."

Bryant's coach now stands alone.

Jackson, the chilled-out, bow-legged Zen Master who won six league titles in the 1990s with Jordan in Chicago, now has won four with Los Angeles and broke a tie with legendary Boston coach Red Auerbach as the winningest coach in finals history.

"I'll smoke the cigar tonight in memory of Red," Jackson said. "He was a great guy."

Bryant and Jackson, whose relationship strained and briefly snapped under the weight of success, are again at the top of their games.

Together.

Jackson, who once called Bryant "a selfish player" now sees the 30-year-old in a far different light.

"He's learned how to become a leader in a way in which people want to follow him," Jackson said. "That's really important for him to have learned that because he knew that he had to give to get back in return, and so he's become a giver rather than just a guy that a demanding leader. That's been great for him and great to watch."

Nothing was going to stop Bryant, who spent the postseason scowling, snarling, baring his teeth and all but breathing fire at anything in his path. For weeks, the All-Star has worn his game face. His daughters called him Grumpy. Only when the victory was his in the final seconds did he allow himself to smile.

"I was just completely locked in," he said. "I was grumpy for a while and now I'm just ecstatic, like a kid in a candy store."

After the final horn, Bryant leaped into the air and was quickly engulfed by his teammates, who bounced around the floor of Amway Arena. Bryant then gave his long, heartfelt hug and shared a few words with Jackson before sweeping up his little girls, both wearing gold Lakers dresses, into his arms.

It was just as he dreamed.

"It finally felt like a big old monkey was off my back," he said. "It felt so good to be able to have this moment. For this moment to be here and to reflect back on the season and everything that you've been through, it's top of the list, man."

Bryant had come up short twice in the finals before, in 2004 with O'Neal against Detroit, and again last season against the Celtics in the renewal of the league's best rivalry. The Lakers were beaten in six games, losing the finale in Boston by 39 points, a humiliating beatdown that Bryant and his teammates had trouble shaking.

They went to training camp with one goal in mind. This was going to be their season, and except for a few minor missteps, it was.

In the locker room afterward, Bryant made sure Jackson got a champagne shower.

"He took his glasses off, threw his head back and soaked it all in because this is a special time," Bryant said. "For us to be the team that got him that historic 10th championship is special for us."

After beating Utah in the first round, Los Angeles was forced to go seven games against Houston, which lost center Yao Ming to an injury. The Lakers then took care of Denver in six games, setting up a matchup with the shoot-from-their-hips Magic, who made their first visit to the finals since O'Neal took them there in 1995.

Orlando will be haunted by moments in a series that swung on a few plays and had two overtime games.

After losing Game 1 by 25 points, the Magic had their chance in Game 2 but rookie Courtney Lee missed an alley-oop layup in the final second of regulation. In Game 4, Dwight Howard clanged two free throws with 11.1 seconds, and the Magic allowed Derek Fisher to nail a game-tying 3-pointer to force OT.

Howard, the Magic's superhero center, was hardly a factor in Game 5. He scored 11 points, took just nine shots and never got a chance to get going. Rashard Lewis scored 18 points, but was only 3 of 12 on 3s for Orlando, which after living on the 3, finally died by it.

The Magic went just 8 of 27 from long range.

"I thought our guys fought hard," coach Stan Van Gundy said. "But they just had an answer for everything."

Orlando was trying to become the first team to overcome a 3-1 deficit in the finals. They had rallied to knock off Philadelphia and Boston, and then upset LeBron James and Cleveland in the conference finals. The Magic always felt they had a shot at history.

Bryant, though, wouldn't be denied his place.

Orlando's magical mystery tour came to a quick end.

"It hurts," Howard said. "It hurts a lot. But you can learn a lot from losing. Sometimes you've got to lose to win."

As teammates, Bryant and O'Neal were nearly unbeatable on the court. Off it, there were problems.

The pair won three straight titles together from 2000-02, but the Bryant-O'Neal dynasty became dysfunctional as both fought for control with Jackson publicly siding with his All-Star center. It all eventually crumbled in 2004 when O'Neal was traded to the Miami Heat.

Bryant was blamed for the breakup, and as the years passed, his many critics said he couldn't win one by himself. He couldn't, but the addition of Gasol, who came over in a stunning trade from Memphis last season, filled O'Neal's massive void at center and gave Bryant help.

Fisher, who has four rings himself, came back to L.A. after stints in Golden State and Utah and became a steadying force. If not for his two key 3-pointers in Game 4, this series would still be going.

The Lakers were anything but The Kobe Show.

They got help from their entire roster as Odom, Trevor Ariza and Andrew Bynum, who missed most of last season and the playoffs with a knee injury, came through.

It all came together.

"To have the attitude of we're going to become a better defensive team, a better rebounding team and then to actually do it and to see it all happen, it feels like I'm dreaming.

"I can't believe this moment is here."

LA LAKERS

From Page 28

Bryant scored 30 points and was the finals MVP, but he wouldn't be lofting any trophies without the help he got from a solid but unspectacular group that turned out to be the perfect support for him.

"I think as teammates we understand what kind of player he is, what he brings to the table, and we try to complement each other," Pau Gasol said. "I think what we've been doing well this year is understanding what our roles were, what our abilities are out there as individuals and make it work as a team. It really worked out well. I think we all understood how to play this game together and to take us to this championship."

Kobe's supporting cast:

■ Gasol, the supposedly soft player who stood up to Superman, had 14 points and 15 rebounds.

■ Lamar Odom, with the superstar skills he willingly accepted a sixth man role, had 17 points and 10 boards.

■ Derek Fisher, the veteran who found his missing shot just in time to swing the series in Game 4, scored 13 points.

■ Trevor Ariza, the swingman who couldn't shoot and has turned into a reliable threat from outside, added 15.

It was last year in Los Angeles' humiliating loss to Boston in Game 6 that coach Phil Jackson had to leave Bryant on the court longer than usual in the first half, with no other Lakers able to get anything going.

This time, everyone but Bryant had it going during the decisive second quarter.

Bryant scored only four points in the period, with just one basket during a 16-0 burst the Lakers rode into the lead.

With the Lakers trailing 40-36 midway through the period, Fisher and Ariza hit 3s, and after a jumper by Bryant, Ariza made another 3 for a 47-40 lead. Fisher followed with another bucket, Ariza hit a free throw, and a basket by Odom pushed the lead to 52-40.

Bryant averaged more than seven assists in the series, confident when he gave the ball up his teammates would do something good with it.

"Kobe was the thrust that created shots for guys and the opportunities for guys on the floor," Jackson said. "That was really our chance, and we said at halftime, we get another opportunity like that, we have this game in hand if we can just crack one more three-minute span like that and create some turnovers and run outs and do it again. Kobe said, 'I'll push the guys and I'll find guys if you guys run the court.'"

It was less than two years ago, frustrated after a second straight first-round elimination, that Bryant thought so little of his teammates that he said he wanted to be traded.

Instead, the Lakers decided to keep him and build a contender around him.

Fisher came back to Los Angeles so his family could live in a large city with the health care they needed to treat his young daughter's cancer. The Lakers then stole Gasol, who even Jackson wasn't sure was tough enough to be part of a champion, in a trade with Memphis before the 2008 trade deadline.

"Got a new point guard, got a new wing, got a Spaniard, and then it was all good," Bryant said. "It was all good. I had a bunch of Christmas presents that came early."

They struggled at times in the postseason. Fisher looked old and slow, and his shot was off. Odom was shaky for a few games after a hard fall on his back in the second round, when the Lakers needed seven games to get past Houston.

The Showtime Lakers of the '80s were loaded with star power, and their championship teams in this decade were led by Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal.

Only one superstar on this team, but plenty of help for him.

Just what Bryant needed.

JACKSON

From Page 28

relatively easy 99-86 Lakers victory over Orlando, a team that had beaten L.A. twice in the regular season but fell in five games in the NBA Finals.

Jackson, wearing a gold baseballl cap with the Roman numeral 10 on it, said he would emulate the late Celtics coach, who was legendary for smoking a victory cigar after games.

Jackson says he would "smoke the cigar tonight in memory of Red. He was a great guy."

Orlando coach Stan Van Gundy says Jackson is the greatest coach in NBA history. Van Gundy called Jackson's 10 titles an "incomprehensible" achievement, adding: "The guy wins all the time."

MISTER

From Page 27

PIC Magellan lunch for 2, and $100 cash.

Quinn and Owens settled for PIC Water Park pass for four and $60 cash. Eck and Roskow finished third, while Bruce Berline and Nathan Chargualaf placed fourth.

Mister, Quinn, and Owens were later named most valuable players and received special prizes from tournament sponsors.

Other top winners in the tournament played over the weekend were Melody Matson and Janna Young in the women's doubles and Pimp Mama in the Four-person division.

Matson and Young bested six other teams in the women's doubles, capping their domination of the tournament with a finals win over 2009 Queen of the Beach Nicole LeBlanc and Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association president Laurie Peterka.

The duo of Young and Matson defeated Linda Anastacio and Angie Mister in the first round, then topped Loveme Phillip and Nakissa Lizama in the quarterfinals before advancing to the title match after outclassing Peterka and LeBlanc.

LeBlanc and Peterka earned a rematch with Young and Matson after downing tournament director Lindsey Sosovec and Kegn Hall in the loser's bracket semifinals.

In the four-person division, which was played last Saturday, Pimp Mama prevailed over Duck Tape in the finals.

Pimp Mama members were Mark McDonald, Dale Roberts, Owens, Quinn, and Matson.

Pimp Mama won its debut over PUD, then moved into the quarterfinals after thumping Those Guys. In the semifinals, Pimp Mama was paired against Jazzercize in the semifinals.

Duck Tape, which had Nelson, Angie and Tyce Mister, Berline, and Anastacio as members, won over Tibuk in its first game before bowing to Jazzercise in the next match. Duck Tape began its uphill climb from the loser's bracket with a win over PUD and Those Guys. The Nelson-led Duck Tape then stunned Jazzercize in the last semis game to advance to the finals.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	38	25	.603	–
New York	36	27	.571	2
Tampa Bay	34	31	.523	5
Toronto	34	31	.523	5
Baltimore	27	36	.429	11

Central Division

Detroit	34	29	.540	–
Minnesota	32	33	.492	3
Chicago	30	34	.469	4 1/2
Kansas City	28	34	.452	5 1/2
Cleveland	29	36	.446	6

West Division

Texas	35	27	.565	–
Los Angeles	32	29	.525	2 1/2
Seattle	30	33	.476	5 1/2
Oakland	27	35	.435	8

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Philadelphia	36	25	.590	–
New York	32	29	.525	4
Florida	32	33	.492	6
Atlanta	30	32	.484	6 1/2
Washington	16	45	.262	20

Central Division

Milwaukee	34	29	.540	–
St. Louis	34	30	.531	1/2
Cincinnati	31	31	.500	2 1/2
Chicago	30	30	.500	2 1/2
Pittsburgh	30	33	.476	4
Houston	29	32	.475	4

West Division

Los Angeles	42	22	.656	–
San Francisco	34	28	.548	7
Colorado	31	32	.492	10 1/2
San Diego	28	34	.452	13
Arizona	27	37	.422	15

Yesterday's Games

N.Y. Yankees 15, N.Y. Mets 0
Florida 11, Toronto 3
Baltimore 11, Atlanta 2
Philadelphia 11, Boston 6
Pittsburgh 6, Detroit 3
Tampa Bay 5, Washington 4
Chicago White Sox 5, Milwaukee 4
Kansas City 7, Cincinnati 1
Chicago Cubs 3, Minnesota 2
L.A. Dodgers 6, Texas 3
Colorado 7, Seattle 1
L.A. Angels 6, San Diego 0
San Francisco 7, Oakland 1
Houston 8, Arizona 3
Cleveland 3, St. Louis 0

ST. JUDE CLASSIC SCORES

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP)–Scores Sunday from the St. Jude Classic, a $5.6 million US PGA Tour event at 7,239-yard, par-70 TPC Southwind:

FINAL ROUND

Brian Gay	64-66-66-66–262
David Toms	67-66-69-65–267
Bryce Molder	69-63-65-70–267
John Senden	69-66-69-64–268
Paul Goydos	72-64-64-68–268
Robert Allenby	67-64-68-69–268
Graeme McDowell	66-71-69-63–269
Jason Dufner	68-67-69-65–269
Woody Austin	67-66-68-69–270
Jeff Overton	68-67-70-66–271
Heath Slocum	71-63-67-70–271
Brendon Todd	73-65-68-66–272
Kevin Stadler	69-66-70-67–272
Harrison Frazar	69-65-73-66–273
Nathan Green	70-66-70-67–273
Aron Price	73-66-66-68–273
Ben Crane	69-68-66-70–273
Rich Beem	66-68-69-70–273
Lee Janzen	68-71-68-67–274
Roland Thatcher	70-70-66-68–274
Jason Bohn	69-67-69-69–274
Matt Weibring	70-66-68-70–274
Jason Day	70-65-71-69–275
Brad Adamonis	68-72-67-68–275
Michael Letzi	70-67-69-69–275
David Mathis	68-69-69-69–275
Guy Boros	67-66-70-72–275
Bob Estes	69-67-66-73–275
Brett Quigley	69-66-72-69–276
Ronnie Black	72-68-67-69–276
Retief Goosen	68-67-71-70–276
Tim Clark	70-67-69-70–276
Chris Riley	72-68-68-68–276
Marc Leishman	69-68-69-70–276
Tag Ridings	68-69-68-71–276
Camilo Villegas	68-67-75-66–276
Cameron Beckman	68-71-71-66–276
Vaughn Taylor	67-65-69-75–276
Michael Bradley	70-67-69-71–277
Brian Vranesh	73-66-72-66–277
Fredrik Jacobson	67-69-67-74–277
Loren Roberts	67-67-73-71–278
Vance Veazey	67-68-71-72–278
Patrick Sheehan	68-69-71-70–278
Bill Lunde	71-66-69-72–278
Robert Garrigus	69-70-70-69–278
Ricky Barnes	67-69-73-70–279
Chris Stroud	66-70-69-74–279
Jerry Kelly	67-68-72-73–280
James Nitties	70-67-71-72–280
Glen Day	69-69-70-72–280
Bob Heintz	70-65-73-72–280
Cliff Kresge	71-69-69-71–280
Jose Maria Olazabal	66-70-74-70–280
Omar Uresti	70-70-70-70–280

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Strong start for CNMI junior netters

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's boys' 14-and-underteam lived up to expectations on Day 1 of the 2009 North Pacific Qualifying Tournament, sweeping its first six games yesterday at the Rick Ninete Tennis Center in Guam.

The Commonwealth boys' 14-and-under squad is composed of Rafael Jones, Christian Miller, Jake Lee, and Chris Cajigan. Jones and Cajigan won two matches on Day 1, while Lee and Miller prevailed in their debuts and were leading in their second matches at press time.

Jones nearly scored a shutout win in his first game after whipping Guam's Galvin Lee, 6-1, 6-0. The second game was another easy ride for Jones, who defeated Guam's Jonathan Toves in straight sets, 6-2, 6-2.

Cajigan debuted against Palau's Spy Senior and nailed a 6-0, 6-2 victory. The 11-year-old CNMI netter made it two in a row after topping Federated States of Micronesia's Nile Panuelo, 6-3, 6-4.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Rafael Jones, seen here returning a shot to Christian Miller during the PIC netfest finals, swept his opening day games in the 2009 North Pacific Qualifying Tournament yesterday at the Rick Ninete Tennis Center in Guam.

Lee blanked another FSM player, Jake Panuelo, while Miller also shut out, Jake's brother, David.

"So far so good. We got what we expected from our boys' 14-and-under division team. I am confident they will continue to win in the succeeding days of the tournament and have all four of them in the semifinals," CNMI coach Jeff Race said.

The CNMI's girls' 14-and-under team went 3-for-6 with Ilia Corella, Melody Johnson, and Negahr Rastguiy delivering the wins for the visitors.

Corella won over Amanda Hawkins of FSM, 6-4, 6-4, to recover from her opening loss to Guam's Katie Lai, 2-6, 0-6. Rastguiy prevailed in her NPQ debut against Maggie Finnen of FSM, 6-4, 6-3, while Johnson downed Danielle Adams, also of FSM, 6-2, 6-1.

"I think Melody has strong chances in finishing in the Top 2," Race said.

Jeane Bracken and Amy Arenovski, who are competing in the NPQ for the second time, bowed to Lai, 2-6, 0-6, and Ashley Madler, respectively. Arenovski won the first set, 7-5, but the Guam netter swept the last two sets, 6-4, 6-1.

In the girls' 18-and-under, Jodel Fernandez and Theecel Minor outclassed their first round foes. Fernandez thwarted Palau's Abigail Gbewonyo, 7-5, 6-0, while Minor defeated FSM's Sofie Finnen, 6-3, 6-3. Minor and Fernandez played their second match yesterday with the former leading against Palau's Marika Otto and the latter also ahead over her Guamanian opponent.

Benjie Decena had a perfect 2-0 record on Day 1, while Woo Suk Chang split his matches in the boys' 18-and-under.

Decena whipped Guam's Jon Wah Park, 6-0, 6-1, and teammate Nathan Nutting, 6-0, 6-0. Chang beat fellow CNMI player Sung Hoon Ham, 6-0, 6-1, before losing to Guam's Will Kuh, 6-2, 4-6, 0-6.

Nutting won his first game against FSM's Jerro Basa, 6-1, 6-7, 6-2.

"The boys' 18-and-under division will be the most challenging event for our CNMI team. I hope Benjie will keep his winning ways and give us one slot," Race said.

"Overall, we have strong chances to achieve our target of seven slots. However, I am still hoping to lose my hair when we get eight spots," he added.

The Top 3 finishers in each age group will earn seats on the North Pacific Team that will compete in the 2009 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji in August. However, only two players [in the Top 3] from the same nation are eligible to earn slots on the squad. The fourth spot is reserved for Kiribati players.

Race in the last two years had challenged CNMI netters that he will have his head shaved if the Commonwealth's bets take eight slots in the NPQ. In those two years, CNMI came up one spot short of seeing Race sport a new hairdo.

Mister, Nelson lead PIC volleyball winners

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Micronesian Games teammates Tyce Mister and Chris Nelson joined forces again in last weekend's 11th PIC Seaside Grill Beach Volleyball Tournament on the Pacific Islands Club sand court to top the men's doubles division.

Mister and Nelson, who won the gold medal in the 2006 Micronesian Games on Saipan, downed the pair of Russ Quinn and Bill Owens in the finals last Sunday to rule the nine-team field.

The Micronesian Games winners debuted with a victory over youth players Joemil Tamino and Brandon Chargualaf.

Women's doubles champions Melody Matson, left, and Janna Young show the prizes they won in the 11th PIC Seaside Grill Beach Volleyball Tournament held last Sunday on the Pacific Islands Club sand court.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mister and Nelson then had an early faceoff with Quinn and Owens with the former pair winning to advance to the semifinals.

In the semifinals, the tandem of Mister and Nelson thwarted the duo of Scott Eck and Jazz Roskow to gain the first finals seat.

The pairs of Roskow and Eck and Quinn and Owens were relegated to the loser's bracket and dueled for the last finals ticket. Quinn and Owens prevailed, but failed to avenge their semis loss to Mister and Nelson.

Besides the bragging rights in the men's doubles division, Mister and Nelson also won PIC Water Park pass for two,

See MISTER on Page 26

CNMI Senior All-Stars out to regain World Series spot

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI Senior All-Stars have been undergoing rigorous training for more than three weeks in preparation for their bid to reclaim a World Series ticket.

"The boys are really working hard and determined to get their spot back," CNMI Senior All-Stars manager Patrick Tenorio said.

Tenorio's wards are training twice a week with every training session lasting for more than four hours.

The CNMI Senior All-Stars are composed of Dave Jones, Dominic Chargualaf, Eli Augenbaugh, Eric Tenorio, Harry Nakamura, Joe Palacios, Jonathan Celis, Joshua Jones, Juan Maratita, Mart Sablan, Mike Iguel, Nokki Saralu, Peter Tenorio, Richard Dela Cruz, Tom Agulto, and Tony Aguon. Jonathan Tenorio is the team's head coach and will be assisted by John Manibusan.

The CNMI bets are going to Jakarta, Indonesia this weekend to compete in the 2009 Asia Pacific Regional Tournament. Victory in the regionals will earn the Commonwealth a slot to the World Series in Bangor, Maine.

The last time a CNMI team was in Maine for the World Series was in 2007 with the Juan I. Tenorio-managed squad posting a 2-2 record in Pool A. The Commonwealth's sluggers also made it to the World Series in 2004 with Jess Wabol managing the Senior All-Stars and moving the team a win away from advancing to the finals.

In the 2008 regionals, which Saipan hosted, the CNMI failed to defend its Senior League title after losing to the Philippines, 6-7.

This year, Patrick Tenorio is confident they have strong chances in winning the regionals and earning a ticket to the World Series.

"We have very good pitchers and strong hitters. We also have a steady defense and every time we practice we work hard to make our defense more solid. The players are ready and will give their best in every game in Jakarta to make the CNMI proud," Tenorio said.

The CNMI Senior All-Stars will leave Saipan on Friday. The regionals will run from June 23 to 28 with the CNMI battling Guam and Philippine teams. From Saipan, the Commonwealth's sluggers will stay overnight in Guam, then head to the Philippines before going to Jakarta.

In Jakarta, Tenorio is expecting his wards to be greeted by warmer weather, but he is confident the CNMI bets can handle the heat and still deliver.

"I believe it is hotter there than here, but some of my players have been to Jakarta when they competed for the Junior League, so somehow they are familiar with the weather and the field," Tenorio said.

NMC golf tops target, raises around $70K

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

One hundred forty golfers participated in the 7th Annual NMC Foundation Open Golf Tournament, surpassing organizers' target of 120 players.

"We are very thankful to golfers in the CNMI for taking time out to play and at the same time help the foundation in raising funds to meet the educational goals of our students," said NMC Foundation president Babauta in his brief remarks during the awards ceremony Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort.

Babauta said around $70,000 was raised from the annual tournament, which had competition in six divisions, namely the Championship Flight, Seniors, Ladies, A, B, and C.

Dandan Driving Range instructor Seung Woo Kang ruled the Championship Flight, besting runner-up Adam Hardwicke and 2004 winner Jeff Taylor. Kang shot an even par 72 to beat 11 other participants in the centerpiece flight. Hardwicke carded a 2-over par 74, while Taylor was three shots back off the lead with his 3-over par 75.

Babauta

Other top finishers were former Superior Court presiding judge Edward Manibusan (Seniors), Leina Kim (Ladies), Leo Ganacias (A Flight), Ben Duenas (B Flight), and John Terlaje (C Flight).

Babauta, along with NMC president Carmen Fernandez and NMV Foundation board director Ivan Quichocho, led the awarding of certificates and cash prizes to the winners in the six flights.

The champions of each flight went home with $500, a certificate, and a round-trip ticket (Palau, Cairns, and Manila) from Continental Airlines, runners-up took $300, and third placers pocketed $200.

No golfer won either of the $25,000 cash and 2010 Mazda 3 hole-in-one prizes, but Steve Balakrishna and Ed Cho were among those who made closest to the pin shots and won cash prizes.

Meanwhile, Babauta, on behalf of the NMC Foundation, thanked volunteers and companies for helping make the seventh edition of the fundraising tournament a success.

The NMC golf tournament drew support from Aon Insurance, Bank of Hawaii, Triple J Motors, Continental Airlines, Pacific Islands Club, IT&E, Chong's Corporation, Dial Rent To Own, Laolao Bay Golf Resort, Luen Fuang, Saipan Sunset Cruise, and Pacific Trading Co.

Strong start for CNMI junior netters

The CNMI's boys' 14-and-under team lived up to expectations on Day 1 of the 2009 North Pacific Qualifying Tournament, sweeping its first six games yesterday at the Rick Ninete Tennis Center in Guam.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Yankees rough up Santana, rout Mets 15-0

Derek Jeter and the Yankees hammered pitcher Johan Santana in a 15-0 thrashing of the Mets on Sunday for the biggest blowout in Subway Series history.

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Kobe leads Lakers to 15th NBA title

By TOM WITHERS
AP SPORTS WRITER

Kobe Bryant pulled Phil Jackson close, embracing his coach and looking him straight in the eyes. After all they'd been through, this was their moment, their championship, their time. This was the one to top all the others.

The one without Shaq.

The one to pass Red.

Bryant's seven-year chase of a coveted championship is finally over. He's got his fourth title, and Jackson his record 10th. One year after failing in the finals, Bryant and the Lakers have redemption, and all the rewards that go with it.

The Lakers earned their 15th title on Sunday night as Bryant scored 30 points and Pau Gasol added 14 and 15 rebounds in a 99-86 Game 5 win over the Orlando Magic, who ran out of comebacks.

It took longer than Bryant expected, but he has stepped out of former teammate Shaquille O'Neal's enormous shadow—at last. His fourth championship secured a strong case can be made for Bryant being the league's best player since Michael Jordan hung up his sneakers.

Bryant, who averaged 32.4 points and was named finals MVP, said the can-he-win-without-Shaq talk annoyed him.

"It was like Chinese water torture," he said. "I would cringe every time. I was just like, it's a challenge I'm just going to have to accept because there's no way I'm going to argue it. You can say it until you're blue in the face and rationalize it until you're blue in the face, but it's not going anywhere until you do something about it.

"I think we as a team answered the call because they understood the challenge that I had, and we all embraced it."

O'Neal, now with the Phoenix Suns, was glad to see Bryant win another title.

"Congratulations kobe, u deserve it," O'Neal said on his Twitter page. "You played great. Enjoy it my

See KOBE on Page 26

AP

Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant raises the Larry O'Brien championship trophy after the Lakers beat the Orlando Magic 99-86 in Game 5 to win the NBA basketball finals Sunday, June 14, 2009, in Orlando, Fla.

LA Lakers depth comes to Kobe's aid

AP

Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom hugs teammate Pau Gasol after the Lakers beat the Orlando Magic 99-86 in Game 5 to win the NBA basketball finals Sunday, June 14, 2009, in Orlando, Fla.

ORLANDO, Florida (AP)—As great as Kobe Bryant is, one player wasn't going to beat the Orlando Magic.

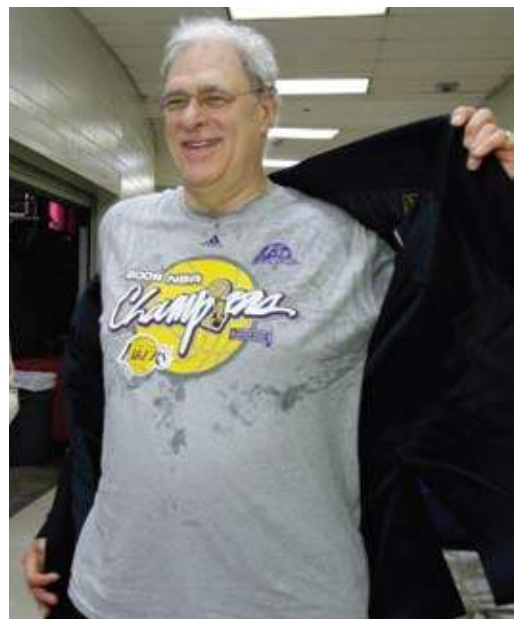
LeBron James learned that lesson.

Bryant didn't have to.

He had plenty of help in the NBA finals, with four teammates scoring in double figures in the 99-86 Game 5 victory Sunday that gave the Lakers a 15th championship.

See LA LAKERS on Page 26

Jackson tops Auerbach with 10 NBA crowns



AP

Los Angeles Lakers coach Phil Jackson walks from the interview room after the Lakers won the 2009 NBA basketball championship with a 99-96 win over the Orlando Magic in Game 5 Sunday, June 14, 2009, in Orlando, Fla.

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Move over, Red Auerbach. Phil Jackson is now No. 1.

Jackson, the chilled-out, bow-legged Zen Master who won six league titles in the 1990s with Michael Jordan in Chicago, now has won his fourth with the Los Angeles Lakers and broke a tie with legendary Boston coach Red Auerbach as the winningest coach in finals history.

Jackson's record-breaking triumph came in a

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